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ABSTRACT

Four issues of this periodical of the California Association for the Gifted focus on: (1) issues in gifted education; (2) professional development; (3) history and social science for gifted learners; and (4) equity and excellence. Among major articles are the following: "Profoundly Gifted Guilt" (James R. Delisle); "Grouping the Gifted: Myths and Realities" (Karen B. Rogers); "Synchronizing Gifted Education with General Education" (Sandra N. Kaplan); "A Call to Action" (James J. Gallagher); "Overcoming Bias in Gifted and Talented Referrals" (Del Siegle); "Administrators Are Keys to High Quality Programs" (Carolyn R. Cooper); "Mentors in Print" (Susannah Richards); "Gifted Education and Social Studies: Engaging All Learners" (Michael M. Yell); "Creating Simulations for Social Studies Classrooms" (Mary Pat Vargas); "Giftedness in Poverty" (Paul D. Slocumb); "Equity in Gifted Programs: How Do We Measure Up?" (Elinor Ruth Smith); and "DISCOVER: Changing the Way We Think about Education" (C. June Maker and Robert A. Lane). Each issue also includes regular departments covering educational trends, parent questions, underrepresented populations, a teacher focus, hands-on curriculum, Web Watch, software review/s, and book reviews. (Some individual articles contain references.) (DB)

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Gifted Education Communicator
Volume 32 n1-4 Spr-Win 2001
California Association for the Gifted

Margaret Gosfield, Editor

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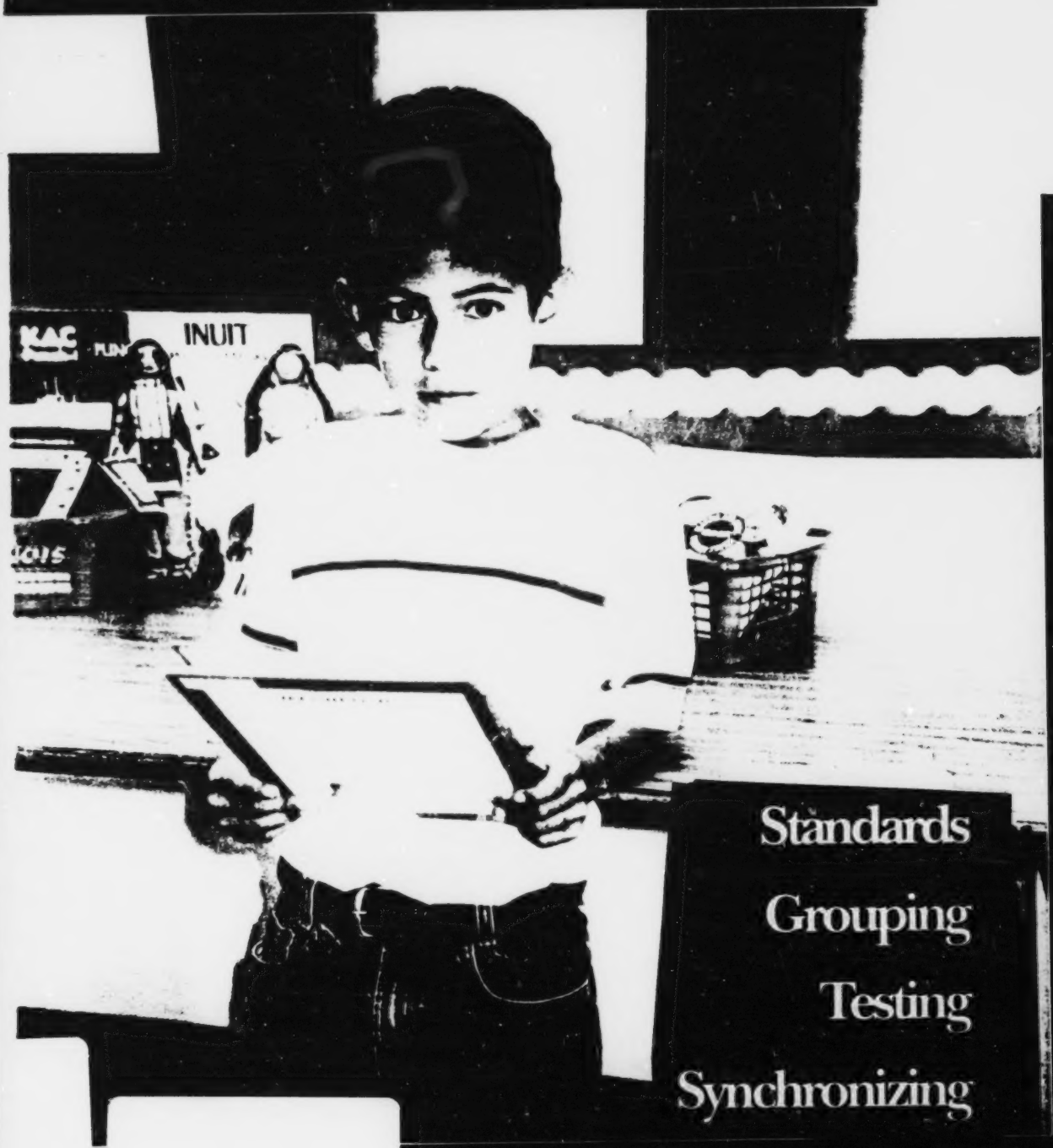

Standards

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Issues in Gifted Education

Gifted Education Communicator

Published by the California Association for the Gifted (CAG)

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Spring 2001, Vol. 32, No. 1 ISSN 1531-7382

Gifted Education Communicator

A Journal for Educators and Parents

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Professional Development in Gifted Education

- Articles directed toward specific audiences:
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  Parents
  Counselors
  Administrators
  Coordinators
- Professional development models:
  Jim Gallagher shares the North Carolina module approach
  Cheryll Adams discusses the pros and cons of online delivery
  Evelyn Hiatt describes professional development in Texas, a legislative mandate
  Sandra Kaplan delineates the California Teacher Institutes
- Additional features
  Degree programs in gifted education
  Summer options for professional development

Fall (September) - History and Social Science
Winter (December) - Special needs of minority and English language learners

Cover:
Pedro Ramirez, at CAG's summer school in Santa Barbara, Calif.; Parents - Marcelino & Elvia Ramirez
Photo by Geneva Wayne

The California Association for the Gifted is a volunteer organization as is its editorial board. All editors give generously of their time and expertise to make *Gifted Education Communicator* the best journal possible.

Editor
Margaret Gosfield

Margaret Gosfield has been actively involved in gifted education for the past 30 years. Early in her teaching career she was asked to develop the GATE (Gifted and Talented Education) program at her school in Ventura, California; it became the junior high model for the district. She served as the district's program coordinator from 1989 until her retirement in 1997. She holds a B.A. and M.A. from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Gosfield was the recipient of CAG's first Teacher of the Year award in 1985. She joined its board of directors as a regional educator representative in 1990. In 1994 she was elected vice president, becoming president in 1996, and has served as journal editor since 1998. She can be reached at Gosfield@home.com.

Associate Editor for Parent Topics
Jennifer Beaver

Jennifer Beaver comes to us with considerable experience in the field of communication, having done editing and publishing for various nonprofit and professional organizations on a volunteer basis for some time. And for the past dozen years, she has run her own company, J.E.B. Communications, which provides a variety of communication services including the writing of magazine articles, newsletters, brochures, and websites to develop marketing and business plans.

She and her husband have a 10-year-old son who has participated in the local GATE program since first grade; hence her interest in gifted education. Jennifer will make use of both her professional and parental experiences while seeking and preparing resources for parents of gifted children. She can be reached at jebeaver@aol.com.

Associate Editor for National Affairs
Shirley Ching

Shirley Ching has been involved with gifted education since 1980 when her daughter entered the GATE program. She became a parent advocate for the gifted, a teacher advocate for the gifted, and finally a sixth-grade GATE core teacher from 1991-1999. She earned her B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley and M.A. from Azusa Pacific University.

She headed a district committee on language arts standards in Ventura, California, developed a language arts program for her gifted students, and presented workshops on developing and assessing curriculum. She was a 1994 STB Fellow for the Center of Talented Youth, reviewed and edited GATE resources, and published a 70-page anthology of student writing in 1995.

After more than 25 years in public education, she left teaching in 1999 and joined the board as Associate Editor, National Affairs. She can be reached at schingi30@aol.com.

Associate Editor for Curriculum
Virginia McQueen

Virginia McQueen has made gifted education the focus of her career since 1963 when she was appointed a teacher for the Mentally Gifted Minor's program. A graduate of Pacific Lutheran University, she also holds a master's degree in administration from California State University, San Jose.

Her 35-year tenure in the San Jose Unified School District included teaching in self-contained classes, cluster groupings, pull-out programs, and as a district GATE resource teacher. She went on to become an administrator for the GATE program, principal of a GATE magnet school, and district manager of GATE and Categorical Programs.

Virginia has served on the CAG Board as Affiliates Chair and Santa Lucia Regional Representative, and president of the regional affiliate. In her position as Associate Editor for Curriculum she will focus on bringing practical and theoretical information on issues for all constituents. She can be reached at MMMcqueen@aol.com.

Associate Editor for Special Projects
Richard Boolootian

Richard Boolootian has more than 40 years of experience in teaching, writing, research, and media production. He holds a B.A. and M.A. from California State University, Fresno, and a Ph.D. from Stanford University.

From 1957 through 1967 he served as an Associate Professor of Zoology at UCLA. In 1967 he founded his own business, Science Software Systems, Inc., and also served as a teaching science consultant to the Mirman School in Los Angeles. In 1984 he joined the staff of the Mirman School full time as Chairman of the Science Department, and now serves as the Community Relations Officer. He offers a traveling Summer Science Program focusing on unique science experiences for 9- to 13-year-old students.

As the Associate Editor for Special Projects, Richard will oversee a variety of activities, especially those related to the field of science. He can be reached at rabassoc@pacbell.net.

Associate Editor for Book Reviews
Elaine Wiener

Elaine Wiener has been teaching gifted children in Garden Grove, California for most of her career. She has a B.A. degree from University of California at Los Angeles, and over the years studied with such luminaries in the field as May Seagoe, Ruth Martinson, James Gallagher, Jeanne Delp, and Sandra Kaplan.

She has served on the Board of Directors of the California Association for the Gifted and written numerous articles published in the *Communicator*. She was named the Orange Region Teacher of the Year for CAG in 1989. Currently she teaches a self-contained GATE class at Allen ElementarySchool in Garden Grove.

Elaine brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the editorial board along with a love of books and a propensity for good writing. She can be reached at esw.ca@worldnet.att.net.

We at *Gifted Education Communicator* are pledged to provide practical information and ideas to our readers; we think our new departments will assist us in keeping our promise. These short, one- or two-page presentations can easily be reproduced for distribution at parent meetings or to faculty and support staff. We believe there is something for everyone within the GEC Departments; let us know what you think.

NATIONAL FORUM

A topic of current interest or controversy in the field will be featured each issue in the National Forum. Two or more discussants will present differing viewpoints in order to encourage thoughtful examination and discourse among our readers. We are grateful to **Joseph Renzulli** for starting us off with his "think piece" on standards and to **Barbara Clark** for her discerning response.

The National Forum is coordinated by Associate Editor for National Affairs, Shirley Ching. To submit suggestions for topics and possible discussants, please contact her at schingi30@aol.com.

EDUCATIONAL TRENDS with Catherine Barkett

Gifted education cannot exist in a vacuum but must operate as part of the larger world of general education. Catherine Barkett will select some aspect of general education each issue and examine its impact on the field of gifted education. Barkett is especially qualified for the task after working 22 years in various roles for the California Department of Education. These include her duties as Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Education and Administrator of the Curriculum Frameworks and Instructional Resources Office. She is currently California Curriculum Consultant for McDougal Littell, part of Houghton Mifflin.

WEB WATCH with Carolyn Kottmeyer

As the Internet becomes a larger and more comprehensive source of information and an ever more popular place to exchange ideas, it seems imperative that we make web recommendations to our readers. Carolyn Kottmeyer is the webmistress of Hoagies' Gifted Education Page (www.hoagiesgifted.org) and promises to provide GEC readers with links to the best of the Internet regarding parenting and educating gifted children.

Kottmeyer serves on the Board of Directors of SENG (Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted) and writes for the Hollingworth Center's journal, *Highly Gifted Children*.

TEACHER FEATURE with Carol Ann Tomlinson

Teachers as well as parents have many questions concerning how they can best meet the needs of gifted students. Addressing these questions will be Carol Ann Tomlinson, Associate Professor of Educational Leadership, Foundations, and Policy at the University of Virginia. Tomlinson spent many years teaching in public schools in North Carolina and Virginia and was named the 1974 Virginia Teacher of the Year.

Tomlinson is the current president-elect of the National Association for Gifted Children and will assume the presidency in September of 2001. She is coordinating an NAGC project to produce a series of professional development modules to train teachers and counselors. Tomlinson's most recent publication is *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners*, published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development in 1999.

ASK AN EXPERT

This ongoing feature is designed to answer parent questions. The column is coordinated by Jennifer Beaver, Associate Editor for Parent Topics. She will select from the many questions received by CAG from parents and seek experts to prepare practical answers. Beaver can be reached at JEBeaver@aol.com.

We thank **Arlene DeVries** of the Des Moines Public Schools for serving as our first expert. DeVries is the Community Resource Consultant in Des Moines as well as a member of the Board of Directors of SENG (Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted). She facilitates parent discussion groups using the SENG model she and James Webb created.

SOFTWARE REVIEW with Patricia Robertson

Mainstream software is not always appropriate for use in gifted education classrooms. Patricia Robertson will introduce and examine software that engages students and teachers in high-end learning and assists them in organizing their ideas or final products.

Robertson is an educator living in northern California and has experience as a classroom teacher, library media specialist, technology coordinator, and administrator. Ms. Robertson has been involved with technology in education for almost 20 years. She has designed and taught many professional development seminars and has presented at numerous conferences. She is the co-author of two books on using the Internet in the classroom.

TALKING ABOUT BOOKS with Jody Fickes Shapiro

Jody Shapiro loves children's literature and loves talking about books with both children and adults. However, you should expect more than just a laundry list of current or classical children's literature in this department. Shapiro constantly seeks ways to engage children and their parents and teachers with the books she loves. In this first column she describes a method of establishing parent-child groups for the purpose of reading and discussing sets of books with common themes.

Shapiro is a former school librarian, children's literature consultant, and owner of Adventures for Kids children's bookstore in Ventura, California. She is currently on a two-year adventure in Australia, but will send us her column via e-mail.

UNDERREPRESENTED POPULATIONS with Joan Franklin Smutny

As educators and parents of gifted children, we know that one of the field's thorniest problems is identifying and serving children who come from backgrounds which may mask their giftedness or make appropriate service difficult to deliver. This department will serve as a means of increasing awareness and providing follow up resources.

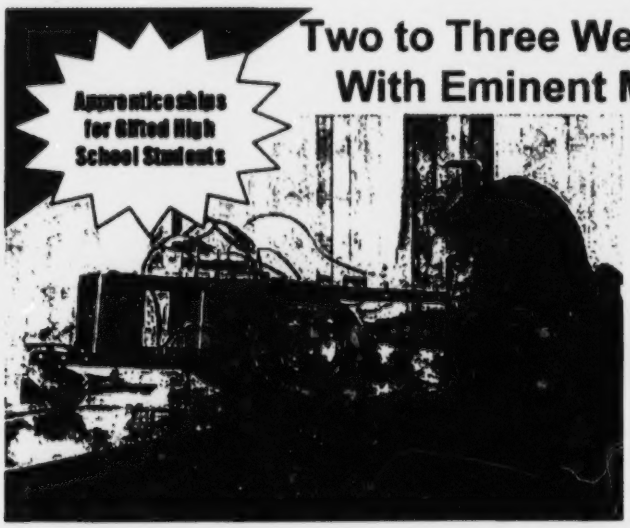
Joan Franklin Smutny, the coordinator of this department, will write some of the columns herself and will seek experts in particular areas to write others. Smutny is director of the Center for Gifted at National-Louis University, Evanston, Illinois. She directs special summer programs in the Chicago area for gifted students including disadvantaged, minority, and bilingual children. Her most recent books are *Stand Up for Your Gifted Child* by Free Spirit Publishing and *Underserved Gifted Populations* by Hampton Press.

ILLUSTRATIONS with Jon Pearson and Ken Vinton

Creativity is one of the hallmarks of gifted production and GEC has its own illustrators to make us sit up and take notice. They will tickle our funny bones as well as make unforgettable visual reminders of the written word.

Jon Pearson is an internationally known speaker, learning skills consultant, and author. He has performed on stage and television and in schools for more than fifteen years and has worked with over a million students, teachers, parents, and administrators across the United States, Canada, and Asia. The U.S. government selected him to tour schools throughout the Orient. He travels widely and works with all ages and sizes of audiences—kindergarten through university.

Ken Vinton is trained in art education, printmaking, and lithography and has been teaching art for more than 25 years. He has illustrated three books, the most recent being *You Know Your Child is Gifted When...* published by Free Spirit Publishing. He has presented at gifted conferences throughout the United States. He continues to create and sell his own artwork, and reports that, "I enjoy what I'm doing and bring that with me to every session."



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Courtney McColgan, Journalism Apprentice Summer 2000

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MARCH 8–10, 2001
Georgia Association for Gifted Children (GAGC)
23rd Annual Conference
"Gender and Gifted: Cultural Expectations"
Georgia Center for Continuing Education, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia
Contact: Priscilla George
E-mail: george@www.dalton.k12.ga.us
www.gagc.org

MARCH 15–17, 2001
The North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented and Parents for the Advancement of Gifted Education
2001 NCAGT/PAGE Conference
"Bringing Heart and Soul to Gifted Education"
The Adam's Mark Hotel, Winston-Salem, North Carolina
Contact: 910-326-8463
E-mail: Guthrie3@coastalnet.com
www.ncagt.org

MARCH 30–31, 2001
Becker College and The Association for the Education of Gifted Underachieving Students
"Maximizing Potential: Reversing Underachievement"
Becker College, Worcester, Massachusetts
Contact: Dr. Gail N. Herman
E-mail: gnherman@mail2.gcnet.net
www.cowc.org/news/conf/maximize

APRIL 27–28, 2001
Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education
"Mission: Explore New Perspectives"
Marriott City Center, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Contact: Dee Weaver
E-mail: mweaver@nb.net
www.penngifted.org

APRIL 27–29, 2001
Hollingworth Center for Highly Gifted Children
14th Annual Hollingworth Center Conference
Sheraton Colonial Hotel, Wakefield, Massachusetts
E-mail: giftedconferenceplanners@yahoo.com
www.hollingworth.org

MAY 18–19, 2001
The Wallace Family National Conference on Gifted Education in Rural Schools
The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa
Contact: Jerilyn M. Fisher at 1-800-336-6463 or 319-335-6148
E-mail: jerilyn-fisher@uiowa.edu
www.uiowa.edu/~belinctr/special-events/rural

JUNE 25–JULY 1, 2001
15th Annual Conference on the Autonomous Learner Model for the Gifted & Talented
"Creating the Optimum Learning Environment"
Estes Park, Colorado
Contact 800-345-2577 or ALPSpublishing@aol.com

JULY 9–20, 2001
23rd Annual Confratute
University of Connecticut at Storrs
Contact JoAnn Easton at 860-486-4826
www.gifted.uconn.edu

JULY 13–15, 2001
SENG (Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted)
"Diverse Social and Emotional Needs of the Gifted: Remove the Barriers and Release the Power"
Hilton Irvine/Orange County Airport, Irvine, California
Contact: 602-399-9090
www.SENGifted.org

JULY 31–AUGUST 4, 2001
World Council for Gifted and Talented Children
14th Biennial World Conference
"The World of Information: Opportunities and Challenges for the Gifted and Talented"
Barcelona, Spain
Contact: 818-368-7501
E-mail: worldgt@earthlink.net
www.worldgifted.org

SEPTEMBER 21–23, 2001
Annemarie Roeper Symposium 2001
The Fourth Annual Symposium on the Intricate World of the Gifted Individual
"Toward Wholeness: Mind, Heart, Body, & Spirit"
O'Hare Marriott, Chicago, Illinois
Contact: Ray Swassing, swasing.1@osu.edu or Betty Meckstroth, BetMeck@aol.com
www.xsnrg.com/roeper/index2.html

NOVEMBER 7–11, 2001
National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)
48th Annual Convention
Cincinnati Convention Center, Hyatt and Regal Hotels, Cincinnati, Ohio
www.nagc.org

If your organization has a state or national event planned, please contact Shirley Ching at **schingl30@aol.com** *to list your information.*

10

Is the field of gifted education ready for a new national journal? We believe the answer is yes, and invite you to join us in our mission to serve gifted children. Our goal is to provide practical information and resources that can be used by educators and parents in their daily work with gifted children.

We appreciate the outstanding professional and research journals in the field of gifted education and feel especially indebted to those doing the original research necessary to legitimatize and move the field forward. However, after many years teaching gifted students and working with other educators and parents, we recognize a need for dissemination of the research information and resultant best practices in a form directly usable by practitioners in the field—parents and educators who live and work with gifted children on a daily basis.

Some of you are long-time members of California Association for the Gifted or subscribers to the *Communicator* and we are pledged to retain the best of that journal, but also to expand it and make the *Gifted Education Communicator* even more useful to readers. Some of you are reading our journal for the very first time as a result of our efforts to go beyond the boundaries of California and offer the journal to a national audience. To you we say welcome, and we hope you will like what you see.

It is our practice to focus each issue on a particular topic or theme related to gifted education and to seek experts to prepare articles. In order to provide a broad thematic range each year, we focus one issue on a content or subject area, another on a component of program design, one on a specific subpopulation of gifted children, and finally a wild card or editor's choice. Recent themes have included: mathematics and science in gifted classrooms (Vol. 31, No. 1); identification of gifted children (Vol. 31, No. 2); encouraging passion, leadership, and ethics in gifted children (Vol. 31, No. 3); and highly and profoundly gifted children (Vol. 31, No. 4).

In this issue our theme is somewhat broader than usual with three feature authors and topics: Karen Rogers of the University of St. Thomas shares the latest results of her continuing research on the effectiveness of grouping gifted children in school; she dispels long-held myths and presents convincing evidence regarding the reality of grouping practices. Another issue of ongoing interest is the impact of standardized testing on gifted children and gifted education. Carolyn Callahan of the University of Virginia presents both positive and negative factors for us to consider. Sandra Kaplan of the University of Southern California shares a provocative piece on the relationship of gifted education to general education. She identifies times when it behooves gifted educators to work in tandem with those in general education toward shared goals. And she suggests times when gifted education needs to keep its distance from general education in order to best provide for the needs of gifted children.

We include two additional feature articles: Jim Delisle of Kent State University has prepared an article addressed to parents of profoundly gifted children who often feel inadequate in parenting their precocious children. In fact, many other parents may see themselves in this picture and gain useful insights as well. Mary Pfeifer of the Minnesota Gifted and Talented Development Center piques our interest with an experiment dealing with ADT (assigned downtime) and the waste of time it caused one of her gifted students.

A totally new feature of the journal is the creation of departments. These are short columns which you can easily photocopy and distribute at parent meetings or to educators and support staff. Most of these will be ongoing features written by individuals with expertise on the topic; we are grateful to the department authors for their willingness to give freely of their time and ideas. Other departments will be coordinated by our editors who will seek experts on a variety of subjects. Of particular note is a department we are calling the National Forum. Each issue we will select a topic of current interest or controversy in the field and invite national figures to express different viewpoints. We thank Joseph Renzulli and Barbara Clark for starting us off with the topic of standards as related to gifted education.

Another new feature of *Gifted Education Communicator* is the appearance of advertisements; sponsors help us keep costs down and enable us to disseminate important information to a wide audience. We believe that the services and products they provide will be useful to you as well.

We are proud of our newly established National Advisory Board (see inside front cover). We have already received important information and worthy recommendations from them and consider their support a valuable asset.

Starting a new venture is always a bit intimidating, but exciting as well. The planning and organizing of the past two years must now face the test—the test of whether or not this journal can provide useful tools for you, the busy practitioner, as you work to provide the best educational opportunities possible for gifted children. We look forward to your feedback and suggestions which will help us mold this publication into one that consistently provides stimulating and useful material. ■

—MARGARET GOSFIELD, Editor

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Standards and Standards Plus

A Good Idea or a New Cage?

BY JOSEPH S. RENZULLI

Some advocates for gifted education have jumped on the standards bandwagon without a great deal of thought about the very predictable practical implications of this current national fad. One need only reflect back to the behavioral objectives movement or the performance contracting fad to realize that these kinds of imposed regulations on learning have not improved schools and seldom last longer than the gurus and politicians who think they can legislate results.

If standards are good for all students, it is argued, then it is obvious that we should have "standards plus" for the gifted! At first glance, this assertion seems to make sense—who could be against high standards for our nation and super standards for the gifted? Whenever I think about the standards issue, I like to point to a metal sculpture on my desk that shows a man in a cage clutching the bars, while behind his back the door to the cage is wide open. The sculpture is symbolic of Eric Fromm's classic book, *Escape From Freedom* (1941), in which the author maintains that many people, given the opportunity, will turn their backs on freedom.

Many advocates of gifted education believe that freedom from an inadequate regular curriculum is precisely why we need special programs for exceptional students. Standards and standards plus may sound good, but they are clearly a throwback to the lack of freedom that characterizes so much of regular education. We should not forget that the standards movement came into being because large numbers of low-achieving students are not measuring up on basic competencies. Do we want to use the same rationale as the basis for developing programs that are supposed to be qualitatively different?

Many gifted program models are characterized by the kinds of academic freedom that allow for original investigative activities and variations in expressiveness that are designed to meet the diverse and unique needs of gifted students. The very fact that gifted programs have not had the kinds of rigid, predetermined curriculum that characterizes regular education has allowed us to help bright young people investigate complex problems and venture into advanced levels of creative productivity. The academic and artistic strengths, and the interests and learning styles of targeted students, should be the major rationale for special program opportunities rather than yet another long list of pre-selected standards that will immediately depersonalize what has been the uniqueness of what we call qualitative differentiation. Hard on the heels of prescribed standards will come prescribed curriculum that teaches to the standards, and we will judge our effectiveness with nicely correlated standardized tests. We will, in effect, recreate the very educational model we have been trying to escape. By so doing, we will turn control of our programs over to bureaucrats and committees far removed from the unique interaction that should take place between and among students and teachers who want to wrestle with an interest-based problem that does not have a canned solution. We will have standardized gifted education!

Let me put this another way: How would you feel if I accused you of trying to "standardize" gifted students? Shouldn't programs for gifted students liberate the mind and the spirit of young people rather than trying to make learning conform to some predetermined standard? Although not jumping on the standards bandwagon is counterintuitive to what many may view as common sense, we should remember that the people who history has deemed to be gifted contributors to the arts and sciences and other walks of human life have always been persons who have *defied* standard ways of doing things.

How then should standards fit into education in general and gifted education in particular? I believe that long lists of standards and the current mania about high-stakes testing have, in effect, become the curriculum rather than the things that should be the bookends that surround rich intervening experiences. The misuse of standards and tests is based on the mistaken belief that we can legislate results by creating list after list of standards and using high-stakes tests as gun-to-the-head enforcers of these standards. Lists of content standards, if applied to gifted education, will turn it into a fancy version of the one-size-fits-all curriculum that gifted education advocates have so desperately tried to escape. Even process standards, if overly specified and taught in a mechanical fashion, can create a predeterminism about learning that makes both content and process acquisition the ends of learning rather than means that should be applied to attacking interesting real-world problems.

In the final analysis, the only thing that we can legislate is equality of opportunity. All kinds of excellence—intellectual, moral, scientific, technological, artistic, academic, and commercial—will flourish when we make heroic efforts to create greater access to a broad range of superlative opportunities that should be made available to young people with high potentials. When opportunity is given its due, results will become a function of the ways in which individuals make use of the resources and encouragement that special programs should provide.

These thoughts are based on a conversation about the standards issue in gifted education with Don Treffinger.

Reference

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Professor JOSEPH S. RENZULLI, Ph.D., is director of the Neag Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development at the University of Connecticut; he also directs The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented.

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Standards: On Misconceiving a Positive Concept

BY BARBARA CLARK

A positive concept with exciting potential for making learning more powerful and teaching more effective has been misconceived, misconstrued, and widely misinterpreted.

Before the "new assessment," when only the Webster definition of standards was used, there was a void. Students did not know what concepts or skills they were expected to learn, only the pages that were assigned. They had a schedule of when subjects would be presented, but not why nor what they would be expected to accomplish. They knew there would be assignments, like papers, problems, questions at the end of the chapter, and tests, but it was unlikely that these assignments would require that they understood ideas or performed with skill. Seldom was understanding and actual performance evaluated.

Then an idea was put forward. What if teachers would write down what students should know and be able to do and share it with their students? What if teachers would develop a lot of possible ways students could learn those things and show that they had learned them? And what if teachers then gave their students some choice in how the students learned what they should know and be able to do and in how they showed that? What if once this was done, teachers wrote down what they really used as their own criteria for evaluating what students had done when: (a) it was very well done, (b) it was good, (c) it was just OK, (d) it was just not adequate, or (e) they didn't get it at all?

The idea was to have written clarification of what students should know and be able to do at the end of any course of study, as well as stated ways that would be acceptable to the teacher for them to learn this knowledge and these skills and to show the teacher that they had indeed learned them. The student would be given this information along with clarification of what was required of the student to succeed. The term used for the knowledge that students should learn and skills they should have was "content standards." The term used for ways students could learn and show they had learned was "performance standards." And the written clarification of the teacher's expectations of how well the students performed was called a "rubric." Here is where the problem began.

Unfortunately, the term "standards" was already being used in education. The way most school people, from administrators to classroom teachers and district evaluators to teacher educators, use this term can be summed up in the phrase "setting the standards" or "meeting the standards." This use of standards is logical, as it matches the time-honored definition found in Webster, "Something set up and established by authority as a rule for the measure of quantity, weight, extent, value, or quality"; synonymous with "criterion," and " yardstick."

By using the word "standards" previously used for a very different idea, the new concept of standards to clarify content and performance was lost. What is being practiced in most of today's classrooms is clearly Webster's concept of standards.

This conceptualization supports the practice of establishing criteria for performance that may be achieved and assigning levels, labels, or grades to identify such achievement. By this definition, a standard becomes part of a determination of quality and quantity necessary to achieve identified levels or norms. The standard is to be attained. The child, the teacher, and the school can all be rated on the standard they reach. The success of the teacher can be judged by such a rating. This comparison can be made child to child, teacher to teacher, school to school. The numbers can be published and used to direct the money allotted to each district, distributed to each school, and paid to each teacher. Curriculum can be designed that will increase the numbers, strategies and materials can be adopted to facilitate such increases, and standards can truly create standardization. Every child can learn and the likelihood that all children will learn the same things in much the same way will be improved, guaranteed, required. Education can now be termed, "standards driven."

But was that the concept of standards that Lewis (1995), Linn, (1994), Wiggins & McTighe (1998), and others writing so enthusiastically about the standards movement today intended when they first introduced the idea of standards clarifying what students should know and be able to do? No, and therein lies the problem and the confusion.

From the research on implementing the new idea of standards it was discovered that students learned significantly better, their skills and knowledge base increased, and their grades improved (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1995; National Center on Education and the Economy, 1997; Newmann, 1997). Students began to understand what they were being taught. They began to feel like partners in the learning process and their motivation to learn improved. Many of them actually began to enjoy learning. Instead of "doing" assignments they worked on projects and performed a variety of tasks of their choosing. Even tests were different because they measured what the students had been doing. The classroom became a center for a variety of ways of learning and for a variety of learners.

For the gifted learner these ideas are of even more consequence. For a very long time, learning opportunities for gifted children have been limited except for the few, too few. Research continues to reflect the lack of opportunity for continuous growth and progress available to gifted learners in the regular classroom (Westberg, Archambault, Dobyns, & Salvin, 1993). There is no one person or persons on whom the blame can be placed. It is a complex pattern of lack of knowledge base in giftedness, lack of money, lack of time, lack of energy, lack of desire, lack of belief. But, with the ideas of the new assessment came the possibility that atypical children could be better served. Using curriculum designed for understanding could provide for the more advanced learning needs

of gifted students. Allowing students to choose among performance standards to find ways to learn that would be more closely suited to their diverse and complex needs could make it easier to meet those needs. Revealing the expectations involved in evaluation could help both the teacher and the gifted student realize the levels of achievement to which such students were capable and make the limitations of lower expectations obvious. These were the promises.

In actual practice, the emphasis on standards has led to more use of the logical interpretation of standards and has resulted in even more limitations, more sameness in the curriculum and instruction, and more standardization. The very things that the exciting new ideas were intended to change have now been supported. Gifted learners aren't the only students to be disadvantaged by this malpractice, but they have been damaged the most.

Those who began this latest standards movement must now lead us out of the morass. They must insist that all of education understand their intent, their very good ideas. They must not assume that all is well and everyone is using "standards," the concept they found beneficial, as they have suggested. What is happening in the classrooms, in the schools, and in the administrators' offices is far from the promise of what this positive concept held. What is happening is that the exciting potential for making learning more powerful and teaching more effective has been misconceived and misconstrued. As educators, especially those in gifted education, now rail against the limitations of standards, the new concept of standards and all it could have been has truly become an opportunity missed.

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Understanding By Design

One of the primary works related to the current standards movement is that of Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, *Understanding By Design* (1998). In order to illustrate the importance of standards in curriculum design, the authors present their Backward Design Process.

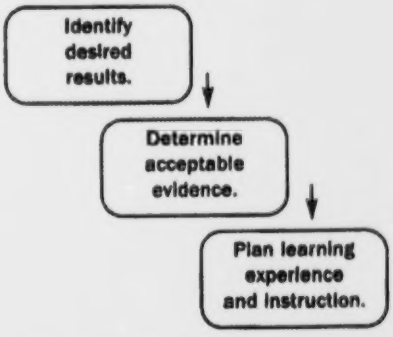


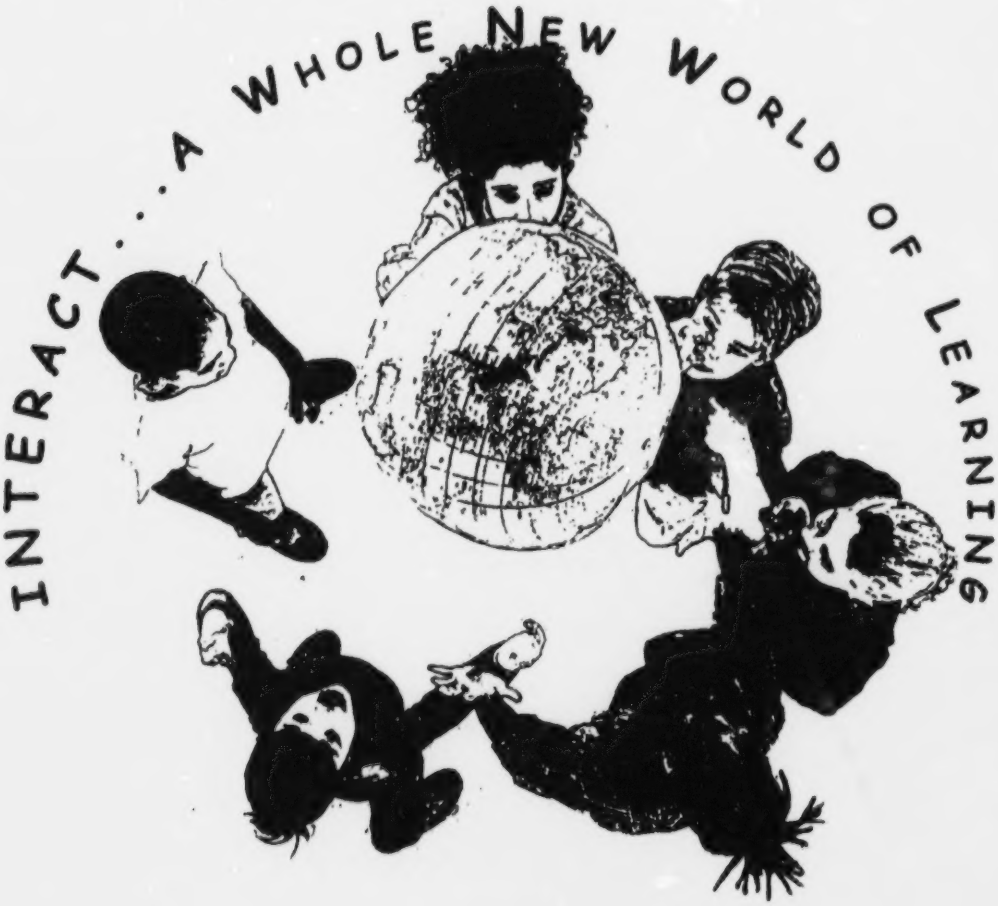
Figure 1.1. Stages in the Backward Design Process (p. 9)

Why do we describe the most effective curricular designs as "backward"? We do so because many teachers begin with textbooks, favored lessons, and time-honored activities rather than deriving those tools from targeted goals or standards. We are advocating the reverse: One starts with the end—the desired results (goals or standards)—and then derives the curriculum from the evidence of learning (performances) called for by the standard and the teaching needed to equip students to perform.

...the approach to curricular design we are advocating is logically forward and commonsensical but backward in terms of conventional habits, whereby teachers typically think in terms of a series of activities or how best to cover a topic.

This backward approach to curricular design also departs from another common practice: thinking about assessment as something we do at the end, once teaching is completed. Rather than creating assessments near the conclusion of a unit of study (or relying on the tests provided by textbook publishers, which may not completely or appropriately assess our standards), backward design calls for us to operationalize our goals or standards in terms of assessment evidence as we begin to plan a unit or course. It reminds us to begin with the question, What would we accept as evidence that students have attained the desired understandings and proficiencies—before proceeding to plan teaching experiences?

Wiggins, G. and McTighe, J. (1998). *Understanding by Design.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.



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The Impact of Content Standards on Gifted and Talented Education

BY CATHERINE BARKETT

This is the first in a series of articles that examine the impact of national educational trends on gifted and talented students. This article addresses content standards; the next article will look at the impact of national testing systems.

A good gardener knows that the way to get all the chrysanthemums in a field to bloom at the same time is to cut off their heads just when they start to bloom. That forces all the plants onto the same time schedule and they all bud and bloom at the same time.

The analogy to public education's treatment of gifted and talented students is startling. We would hope that educators would encourage all students to bloom as early and as often as they can; but in fact advanced students are often treated like precocious early-budding chrysanthemums—they are told to stop thinking, slow down, and to wait for the other students to catch up. In short, their heads are cut off.

The movement toward the establishment of content standards offers educators two possibilities: to encourage gifted and talented students to master standards on their own advanced time table, and to move on to more difficult standards, or to hold gifted and talented students back until all students are ready to master a set of standards and then move on together. I hope that the standards movement will be the impetus for institutionalizing encouragement for all students to learn at their own optimal paces, but I fear that it has the potential to do just the opposite.

The standards movement has taken the nation by storm. Within the last 20 years various professional organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and the International Reading Association (IRA) offered their constituents content standards developed by educators throughout the states. These content standards were an attempt to describe what students should know and be able to do at each grade level in content areas such as mathematics and language arts. Most of those standards have been revised and improved in the last ten years. Many people feel that these early attempts at standards lacked the clarity and specificity of standards now used by many of the individual states, but credit goes to these organizations for fueling a debate on a national level about what constitutes good content standards. In the last 20 years, virtually all states (with the exception of Iowa and Idaho) have established content standards that describe what students should be able to do in at least one content area. Most have established standards in mathematics and language arts, many have standards in the four core areas, and some have established standards in other content areas such as visual and performing arts, health, geography, economics, and physical education.

"In the last 20 years, virtually all states (with the exception of Iowa and Idaho) have established content standards...in at least one content area."

California, Florida, Texas, and other states have insisted within the last few years that publishers use their content standards as the basis of instructional materials development. As a result, content standards are now visible in many textbooks, and the larger publishers are offering periodic standards-based assessments as a part of their instructional package. Some districts are now using standards-based report cards, and statewide assessments may offer standards-based information to parents and educators. And in some districts, part of the annual evaluation of teachers includes an assessment by the principal of how well teachers teach to the standards.

The quality of content standards varies tremendously from state to state. Many states are in the process of evaluating and improving their standards. Although there are different ways of evaluating standards, several criteria seem obvious and noncontroversial. First, the standards must clearly state what the students should know or be able to do. If a standard is not written clearly, it is impossible to determine whether or not it has been met. For example, one Florida standard begins, "The students understand the power of language" (Florida, Language Arts, Grades 6-8, D2). If Florida had stopped there, we would not really understand what behavior to look for in students to gauge whether or not they had met that standard. Wisely, Florida went on to add a clear goal for the grade span, "The student distinguishes between emotional and logical argument" (Florida, Language Arts, D 2.3.3).

Second, the standard should be measurable. While we might all agree that enjoyment in reading is a laudable goal for students, it is very difficult to measure a student's "enjoyment level" and unfair to rank students or evaluate programs on this basis. Furthermore, we want students to do more than just read for pleasure. Part of being a good reader is reading what you need to read (such as bus schedules or job applications) in order to achieve a goal, even though many people do not find that kind of reading "enjoyable."

Third, the standards should identify skills and understandings that are worth achieving. Consider this example, taken from California's English Language Development Standards: "Begin to be understood when speaking, but may have some inconsistent use of standard English grammatical forms and sounds (e.g., plurals, simple past tense, pronouns [he/she]). (ELD Standards, Early Intermediate Level, Grades K-3)

This standard is not written as something to aspire to. We don't want students to aim for inconsistent use of proper English. Instead, this is a benchmark or stepping stone describing a stage through which a student may pass as he

or she works toward attainment of a standard.

Fourth, the standards should be attainable, and yet provide challenges at the same time. If a standard is unattainable, students will become discouraged and cease trying; if it is too easy neither students nor educators will take it seriously.

Several national organizations offer educators their services in comparing state standards to the best in the nation and the world and evaluating the alignment between their content standards and their statewide testing programs. ACHIEVE, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization run by a board of directors that includes Louis V. Gerstner, Jr., Chairman and CEO of IBM Corporation, Philip M. Condit, Chairman and CEO of the Boeing Company, Tommy G. Thompson, Governor of the State of Wisconsin, James B. Hunt, Jr., Governor of the State of North Carolina, provides such a service. As states continue to compare their content standards with one another, and to borrow from and adapt the best, we may see the beginning of a national convergence of opinion on what students should know and be able to do.

The standards movement could have a huge impact on gifted and talented pupils determined primarily by four factors:

1) How a state determines sufficient mastery of the standards (generally, how they establish the cut scores or proficiency levels in their testing program). If the cut score is too low, the standards will become a minimum threshold, easily reached by many students and offering few a challenge. If the cut scores are too high, all but the gifted and talented students may become discouraged. One compromise is to measure achievement in terms of levels (below basic, basic, and exemplary, for example).
2) Whether the pressure to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn the standards shifts the focus exclusively on low achievers, under the misguided theory that "gifted students can teach themselves."
3) Whether a state has a statewide testing program that is closely aligned with its content standards and looks at the progress of sub-groups as well as the total population. Alignment, and the ability to separate scores for groups of students, should help place the focus equally on all students.
4) Whether the state offers financial incentives for students (or educators of students) who show mastery of the standards by exemplary performance on the statewide achievement tests. Financial incentives may increase the focus on gifted and talented pupils.

Through the involvement of parents and educators in the standards-reform movement we can ensure that standards are worth striving for. Readers who would like more information about content standards and programs that compare the achievement of students across states are encouraged to visit the following websites in addition to the website of their own state education agency:

Achieve www.achieve.org
Fordham Foundation www.edexcellence.net
National Assessment of Education Progress, NAEP
www.nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/site/home/asp
Third International Study of Math and Science, TIMSS
www.timss.org
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CATHERINE BARKETT is currently California Curriculum Consultant for McDougal Littell, part of Houghton Mifflin.

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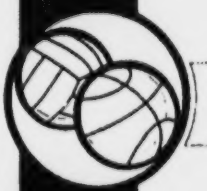

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"How can I help my children deal with difficult social situations?"

This column will feature experts in the field of gifted education, answering questions from parents in the field. Our first expert is Arlene Devries from the Des Moines Public Schools in Des Moines, Iowa.

ARLENE R. DEVRIES

It is baffling to adults that highly capable children with much intellectual prowess and intuitive insight often appear to lack "common sense" social skills. Our immediate reaction is to respond with a killer statement such as, "For someone so smart, you sure can act dumb." Upon further reflection, we begin to understand that the child may be lost in his own thoughts, which are usually of more interest to him than the events surrounding him, or may not see the value of conventional responses that appear trite to him.

Just what are social skills and what do we expect from these students? Linda Silverman suggests socialization is "the ability to adapt to the needs of the group," while social development is "not the pressure to adapt but a deep comfortable level of self-acceptance that leads to true friendships." The pressure to adapt to socially accepted standards may be in conflict with the expression of their abilities and their current value system. The farther they are from the mean, the more they may have to give up to mold to society's expectations.

Students are more likely to respond with appropriate social skills if they are with others of similar interest and ability. If the conversation is not interesting or stimulating to them, they disengage and do not feel compelled to respond in a socially acceptable manner. Adults should be aware of children's interests and talents. They should put them in places where they are likely to find others with whom they feel comfortable. Often summer schools for gifted students or precollegiate programs such as music, art, drama, computer, or sports camps provide opportunities for these students to interact with others like them. Positive social experiences with just one person can become the catalyst to elicit appropriate responses in other social settings.

Does your child prefer to spend time alone? Unlike the general population with a majority of extroverts, the more gifted the child, the higher incidence of introversion. Introverts get energy from within, need time alone, and often feel drained by intense interactions with others. On the other hand, extroverts are energized by being with others and tend to have more friends than do introverts. Adults need to be sensitive to the child's preferred style. Being alone gives one time to read, think, reflect, and create. Often we expect our children to be surrounded by friends when they would rather spend time alone.

The dilemma for educators and parents is determining if the child is spending time alone because he really prefers it, or if the child is withdrawing because poor social skills and low self-confidence lead to fear of rejection. Social skills may need to be modeled and taught.

Does your child observe you relating in a positive way to peers? Discussions about friendship are appropriate at any age. Exploring even a few basic questions can be beneficial: What traits make a good friend? Can you think of a time when you displayed those qualities? What do friends do?

Information to include as you discuss how to develop friendships:

- Listen to each other; talk together; help each other; encourage each other; try to see each other's point of view; use kind words; share feelings; treat each other with respect; know that sometimes it's okay to disagree.
- Let others know you are interested and care about them and their activities.
- Be the first to say "hi!" Don't always wait for someone to speak to you.
- Be accepting of classmates who think and act differently than you. Temper your expectations, as not everyone will measure up to your standards.
- Be sensitive to the difference between sharing some things you do well and "bragging" about how good you are.
- Learn how to share honest opinions with tact so others' feelings are not hurt.

Social behaviors tend to be one of three styles: aggressive, passive, assertive. The aggressive person dominates others. The attitude is, "I count; you don't count." Passive individuals are reluctant to express their own needs and are quite willing to appease others. They act as if, "I don't count; only you count." Assertiveness is the more desirable behavior. Students with this style stand up for their own rights, but also respect the feelings of others. Their basic message is, "I count, but you count also."

Adults may need to spend time with gifted children to help them identify their usual style, perhaps even role play appropriate behavior. For example, if a friend comes to play, the child can practice going to the door and welcoming them with, "Come in. I'm glad you're here." Children need to learn appropriate ways in which to negotiate various activities: "What would you like to play? We can build a city with the Lego's or we can play a board game?" "Would you like apple juice or milk with your snack?" To practice for the time when friends leave, role play going to the door with them: "Thank you for coming. I had a good time. Please come back again."

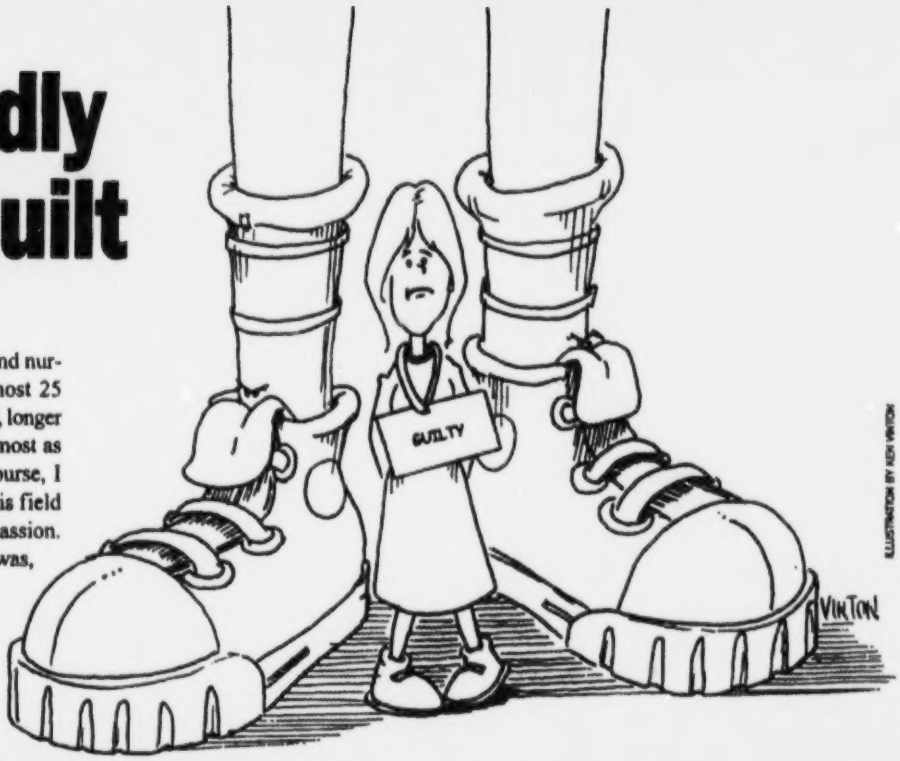
Older children may need to practice stepping forward to greet a person with a firm handshake and direct eye contact. During other activities simple reminders might be necessary: "Look at the person who is speaking," or "It is impolite to read a book during a group discussion."

Avoid nagging or putting pressure on your children to be more social. Acknowledge that social skills may be difficult for them. Label their behavior as independence, which you admire. Affirm the positive experiences you observe and discuss with them what they did, how it felt, and what they could do next time in a similar situation. Children who feel loved and accepted can relax and face social situations in a manner that is comfortable for them. ■

ARLENE DEVRIES is a parent advocate and the Community Resource Consultant for the Des Moines Public Schools. She is a member of the Board of Directors for the National Association for Gifted Children and SENG (Supporting Emotional Needs of Gifted).

Profoundly Gifted Guilt

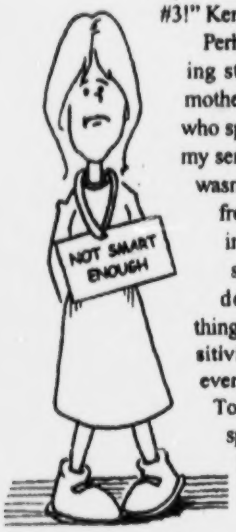
By JAMES R. DELISLE



I've been involved with the care and nurturing of gifted children for almost 25 years—longer than I've been a dad, longer than I've been a husband, and almost as long as I've been literate! So, of course, I thought I'd seen and heard it all in this field of study that has become my life's passion. I wouldn't call myself jaded, but I was, perhaps, a bit too smug about the completeness of my knowledge of gifted children.

During the past year, however, I have had the privilege of getting to know a large number of profoundly gifted children and adolescents. These powerfully bright and intense young people presented realities that I had not experienced previously: a seven-year-old girl taking college courses; a 14-year-old boy whose need to help others caused him to raise thousands of dollars for cancer research; two 10-year-olds whose knowledge of physics far surpassed any college student I know; and an 11-year-old whose high school graduation prank (with several other seniors) involved releasing three pigs into his suburban high school, each of the three pigs adorned with a number: 1, 2, and 4. "I think they're still searching for Pig #3!" Ken giggled.

Parents of profoundly gifted kids want to go to Dr. Spock's office and ask him how to raise kids who don't fit the typical patterns he discusses in his books.



Perhaps the most touching story came from the mother of a five-year-old who spoke to me at one of my seminars in Texas. She wasn't sure whether Jeffrey was "truly gifted" in the test-taking, IQ sense, but she was definite about one thing: his emotional sensitivity to everyone and everything around him. To illustrate, Mom spoke of Jeffrey's reaction to getting a pet kitten. About three days after receiving this living plaything, Jeffrey was holding the kitten as it slept, rocking it back and forth, tears streaming down his face. When Jeffrey's concerned mother asked what was wrong, her young son calmed himself enough to tell her this: "This is the most beautiful creature that has ever existed." Jeffrey's mother's question to me? "Will he ever not be this sensitive?" The answer was obvious.

This Texas mom, and other parents of profoundly gifted children I have had the good fortune to meet, share the concerns of all parents: "Will my child be happy and successful?" and "How can I help my child to become a good person?" But there are also some unique concerns to being the parent of a child who may, indeed, be the family's smartest member. I have noticed what I have come to call PGG or "Profoundly Gifted Guilt," which is the feeling that, in some important ways, parents of extremely gifted children feel unable to adequately raise the child they have been given. These genuine feelings of inadequacy are simultaneously well meaning and ill-placed, for when we downplay our competencies as parents, we do a disservice to both our children and ourselves, as we underestimate the effects of our own importance on the lives of our children.

What are some of the statements that I've heard from parents of profoundly gifted children? Here are some samples.

"I'm not smart enough to help my child." From a very young age, profoundly gifted children have both knowledge and insights that can realistically be described as uncanny. With very little direct instruction, and often limited exposure to the wider world around them, profoundly gifted children just seem to know a fact, a theory, a concept, a truth. To many of their parents, this is scary, for they are unable to point to the genesis of this wisdom in their children. How, then, can these parents take credit for what their children know or how they learned it? When this situation repeats itself often enough—as it will with profoundly gifted children—some of their parents begin to feel a loss of ownership in their parenting. This is only one small step away from feeling inadequate as a parent.

At some point, almost all parents realize that their children know more than they do about particular topics. Generally, though, this occurs when the children become teenagers,

when it is safe for parents to admit that they don't remember enough algebra to help with their 10th grader's math assignment. But when this situation presents itself time and again when the child is six or eight years old, a different parental attitude prevails, generating the onset of inadequacy that is woven into the statement, "I am not smart enough to help my child."

The truth is, parents are not necessarily seen by even the most brilliant of children as the font of all knowledge, the annotated bibliographer of all that is true and wise. Instead, kids, even profoundly gifted ones, see mom and dad as the people who give them baths, prepare their meals, pick them up at soccer, and embarrass them in front of company. Sure, it is a bonus to be seen as an adult who knows a little something about this and that, but the Academic Decathlon is seldom run in the family room or the kitchen. Wise parents know that it is OK to say "I don't know" in answer to even a young child's question. Whether parents then choose to learn the answer together with their child is up to them, but the reality is that effective parenting has less to do with book smarts and more to do with hugs. And these hugs are things that every parent can dole out to their children with wild abandon!

"Each dilemma seems dire and life-changing; and parents of profoundly gifted children often feel as if the wrong decision will result in the most awful of consequence.

"I'm sure if I do the wrong thing I'll just ruin this child!"

Maybe the suggestion has been made that a profoundly gifted child be accelerated several grades in school. Or maybe the hint has been given that the child's high intellect complicates social issues enough that counseling should begin. Or perhaps grandma has warned that if you don't get him out of that computer class and into a sandbox that boy will have troubles for the rest of his life. Whom do you believe? How do you decide? Where do you turn?

Parents of profoundly gifted children often feel isolated in seeking solutions to these and other life dilemmas. Even parents of moderately gifted children may not be able to give much advice, as the problems they are seeing or the situations they are encountering bear little resemblance to the enormity of the issues as perceived by parents of the profoundly gifted. Each dilemma seems dire and life-changing (how else could you describe the decision to allow a 10-year-old to begin taking college courses?) and parents of profoundly gifted children often feel as if the wrong decision will result in the most awful of consequences.

What is often forgotten is that in almost every case, a decision is reversible. So, if the grade skipping doesn't work out as well as it was assumed it might, or if the counselor chosen is someone who doesn't respect the child appropriately enough to help her, gears can be switched or a new direction can be taken. Just like the child who frets so much about the huge assignment coming due that he never begins to do it, parents of profoundly gifted children must realize that the worst decision is no decision. They need to consider the possible side effects, good and bad, of various options, and go with the one that makes the most sense to them at the moment. No one can predict what lies ahead in two weeks, two months, or two years, but keeping an open mind to switching in midstream is one way to alleviate the guilt that any but the optimal choice will bring ruin on a brilliant young life. As my son would say, "Ain't gonna happen."

"I want to talk about my gifted child but I seldom do."

Parents earn bragging rights the minute their child is born. When she first walked, when he first spoke a sentence, or which college accepted the twins are all legitimate milestones that parents are expected to share with their friends and relatives. Usually, there is a quid pro quo attitude about this among adults: "You talk about your child for a while, then I'll tell you about mine."

This social discourse generally runs smoothly, as the stories are believable and the range of embellishments are within bounds that parents can understand and appreciate—until you are the parent of a profoundly gifted child. For when parents begin to say that their child began reading at 18 months, or that she asks questions about the origins of human life at the age of three, or that he is going to start taking a high school geometry class instead of third grade math, they begin to get funny looks. Some people listening to such parents think they are lying or making up stories just to make other children look bad. Others think these are evil parents who push, push, push their child for their own selfish satisfaction. Still others (and they are often relatives) ignore the comments altogether, refusing to see the profoundly gifted child as being anything other than a typical child who is just "a little bit smart."

The effect of these reactions often leads parents of the profoundly gifted to say very little about their child's progress to anyone, for fear they will be stereotyped as "that type" of parent. Perhaps there will be a neighbor or close friend who both believes and relishes the stories that are shared, but these understanding souls are rare. So, the parents choose to go underground, talking only with each other yet feeling frustrated that the birthright of every parent—telling stories about your kid—is being denied because the child they have is more unique than common.

A good solution is to actively seek out parents of other profoundly gifted children (the World Wide Web has made this easier). When a parent of a profoundly gifted child finally hears someone say those beautiful words, "Yeah, I know what you mean. That happened to us last year with our daughter," a curtain is lifted and the play begins. Another answer is to write down the child's landmark events, witticisms, and insights. These can be shared, either moments or years later, with the spouse who wasn't there to hear or see them or with the child who asks, at age 30, "Dad, was I always like this?" And finally, the strongest of parents might just choose to forge ahead and brag anyway, developing all the while a resilient shell that protects against the looks and the words that can hurt if they are taken too inwardly.

"I'd rather have a child who is 'normal' than one who is gifted."

Some parents of profoundly gifted children are so alarmed by the animosity that others demonstrate toward their child's intelligence that they come to believe that giftedness is more of a burden than a blessing. Indeed, some even see extreme giftedness as a hand-

icap, as personally disabling as a profound mental or physical challenge. How sad when the gift becomes a liability, as it denigrates the joy and wonder of early and deep insight.

What parents of profoundly gifted children need to realize is that if their child is precocious far in advance of his years, this is normal behavior—normal for the child, as the individual that he is. This is not to say that the child's performance or depth of understanding is typical, but there is a vast difference between being "normal" and "typical," just as there is a major distinction between their opposites, "abnormal" and "atypical." No one wants to be abnormal, but does anyone really care if they are atypical? It's a linguistic nuance that carries over into one's feelings of adequacy.

To be sure, there are major challenges to raising any child, but the added element of profound giftedness gives a whole new meaning to the word "complex." Still, if parents can refrain from using the "n" word—normal—in front of their children, their playmates, their relatives, and their teachers, perhaps a whole new era of understanding can begin. It's worth a try.

Conclusion

"Drissle, drassle, drussle, drome
Time for this one to come home"

These classic words from an antiquated Saturday-morning cartoon, "The Rocky and Bullwinkle Show," remind me of just how old I really am! In case you were not, like me, around when the Earth was still cooling, the words come from a gifted scientist, the Professor, who sends his gifted lab assistant, Sherman, to different historical events via his Way-Back Machine, a time machine that helped teach little kids like me about both ancient Greece and the Founding Fathers. Sherman's adventures almost always made an impact on history, but his curiosity often got him into trouble, causing the Professor to bring back his young charge with the "drissle, drassle, drussle, drome" spell cited above.

It's weird to remember that spell after all these years, but I write the words here because they seem to fit this article's conclusion. Parents of profoundly gifted kids, like Sherman, sometimes want to go back and rearrange history. They want to make the world a place where all gifted children are understood and accepted. They want to retrace mistaken steps, changing solutions that did not work and forging new directions that lead to better places. They want to learn as much as they can about who gifted kids are, so that when they get one they will know what to do with her. And they want to go to Dr. Spock's office and ask him how to raise kids who don't fit the typical patterns he discusses in his books.

But no parent of a profoundly gifted child wants to give back the child. Yes, profoundly gifted children may be challenging kids to raise, but most of the challenges come from clouding our own adult minds with fears that are unfounded or guilt that is not deserved. Like Sherman, it's time to come on home and recapture the magic that exists in the minds and hearts of our profoundly gifted children—and their parents. ■

JIM DELISLE is a professor of education at Kent State University and a part-time teacher of middle school gifted students in Twinsburg, Ohio. His latest book (with Judy Galbraith) *Meeting Gifted Kids' Social and Emotional Needs*, will be published by Free Spirit Press in Fall, 2001.

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GROUPING THE G

MYTHS AND REA

By KAREN B. ROGERS

Few topics in education have aroused as much passion, both positive and negative, as ability grouping. Jeanie Oakes' book, *Keeping Track* (1985), spurred a national movement to eliminate grouping practices for students of all abilities. With her powerful appeals to emotion, she argued that tracking students had led to a system for maintaining inequity for the poor, the culturally diverse, and the less able in America's schools. One principal, reacting to her message, wrote in *Educational Leadership*,

> The answer to the debate on ability grouping is not to be found in new research. There exists a body of philosophic absolutes that should include this statement: The ability grouping of students for educational opportunities in a democratic society is ethically unacceptable....It should become a moral imperative along with the beliefs that slavery is immoral and that all people are created equal under the law. (Haistings, 1992, p.14)

IFTED

ITIES

A Student's Perspective ▪ By Tristan Ching

My middle school GATE classes were both a highlight and a turning point in my academic career. Looking back, I believe they saved me. As a shy eleven-year-old, I was just beginning to cave in to social pressure that implied that it wasn't "cool" to appear too smart, let alone passionate and enthusiastic about learning. I stopped raising my hand in class, not from fear of being wrong, but from fear of being right.

My GATE classes showed me how wrong I was—wrong, that is, to be satisfied with smart, and wrong to place such a high value on being right. Got the right answer? Great, but what did I do to get the right answer? Could I have taken a more interesting and provocative path? Did I take the intellectual road less traveled? And what would I do with all the information and ideas I received along the way?

It was an exciting time, made even more exciting by the fact that my peers not only accepted my enthusiasm, but also nurtured and inspired it. I remember watching one of the shyest girls in the class chant and play a drum in front of the class to present her findings about an ancient culture we had been studying and flush with pleasure when the class clapped loudly as she finished. I remember one of the most popular guys in the class ahead of me standing up to read a poem he had written and the entire class falling silent at its sorrowful beauty. These two were my role models. My personal and intellectual mantra became the three words that hung above my English teacher's desk, "Take a Risk."

TRISTAN CHING is a recent graduate of Stanford University with a B.A. in English and an M.A. in Dance Education. She is a dancer with Robert Moses Kin and a Pilates trainer in San Francisco.

ILLUSTRATION BY KEN MARSH

Do not pass GO, do not collect...

Then too, educational writers such as Paul George and Robert Slavin have tried to argue similarly for the elimination of tracking using a somewhat more reasoned approach. At one point, Slavin stated,

> Because of the anti-egalitarian nature of ability grouping, the burden of proof must be on those who would claim its effectiveness and indispensability....There is much research still to be done to understand the effects of ability grouping...on student achievement, and more important, to study the effects of alternatives to between-class ability grouping. However, we know enough after 70 years of research on the topic to justify moving away from tracking and beginning a search for instructional methods capable of enhancing the achievement of all learners. (Slavin, 1993, p. 549)

Why, then, when you read how reason and emotion appear to agree on the "bad effects" of grouping, am I continuing to write this article? Perhaps it is because this issue is of such great importance to gifted children. Moreover, what the general education writers are arguing accounts only for the perspectives of the poor and the culturally diverse who are not gifted. Or perhaps it is because these writers have misled this country's current crop of teachers and administrators, leading them to believe the inequity, moral reprehensibility, and anti-achievement arguments about grouping, with little actual research or even scholarly study to back the arguments up.

It all comes down to the myths about ability grouping, often arising out of emotional, political, and economic foundations, and the realities—what the actual studies about grouping have found out about academic, social, and psychological effects. For the remainder of this article, I would like to take you on a tour of the research, both past and present, to see where the realities lie. I will use my comprehensive meta-evaluation of the 14 research syntheses conducted on various forms of grouping published by the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented in 1991. Added to this will be an update of all the research on grouping conducted since that time (an additional 56 studies).

Myth 1: Grouping is not a "picture" of the real world. In our adult lives, particularly in our work and home lives, we must work together in groups almost continuously.

Reality: A recent National Public Radio broadcast (1995) studied the work patterns of adults in the Los Angeles area, finding that approximately 35% of these adults were working from home, with infrequent trips to a centralized location for meetings with others. The reporter viewed this as a picture of the decades to come, whether because of messy transportation issues, the efficacy of technological/electronic transmissions, or the economic efficiency of fewer business centers and buildings to maintain. In fact, it is likely that the 21st century will witness much more individual work done without workers coming to a central place to do business. Each will be accountable for his or her own work, which may be added to other workers' tasks. The "group" project by which all sink or swim may be a dying concept.

At no time in this democracy have adults been forced into having their friends chosen for them. We tend to make friends with others who think and act like we do, people with similar occupations and interests (Schunk, 1996). Yes, we must be able to communicate clearly with all echelons of society in order to buy our groceries, shop, have repairs made on our homes, gas up our cars, and make

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bank transactions, but this skill is not so pervasive nor so difficult to learn to warrant 13 years of cooperative group work in preparation.

Myth 2: Grouping is elitist, undemocratic, and racist. Disproportionate numbers of Asians and Whites are found in high ability groups, and other cultures, such as African American and Hispanic are underrepresented. "Politically powerful" parents of gifted children insist on maintaining these power inequities for their children's "protection."
Reality: Since 1990 and the inception of the Jacob Javits Act, all federal government funds in gifted education have been focused on finding and educating underserved and underrepresented populations of gifted learners. As a part of the evaluation process, projects funded must enumerate underrepresented students identified and served through the innovative methods undertaken in the grants. In fact, none of these grants has been awarded to any project for which the primary goal was to identify and serve the more "traditional" gifted child.

Furthermore, the majority of projects undertaken involve programs in which gifted children are grouped for instruction. Hence, we can call neither gifted education, in general, nor grouping, in particular, racist. In fact, the survey studies of numbers of ethnic minorities engaged in grouped programs make the assumption that high-ability groups are formed to separate out the "riff raff" and to maintain the status of the "in group" (Oakes, 1985). Emil Haller (1989), among others, however, has found that group placement is a result of a student's specific and current performance, rather than skin color or economic class. His experiments using student case studies have shown this time and time again, since the mid-1980s. Other factors may be leading educators to under-identify deserving children for gifted grouping opportunities, such as lack of awareness of cultural values that contradict the general notions of giftedness, such as task commitment, desire to achieve, and persistence. This would suggest that major professional development is in order, not that grouping be eliminated.

Myth 3: In schools that use ability grouping, the "good" teachers get the "good" students. The worst teachers are those responsible for low-ability classes.
Reality: The research on effective teachers of the gifted often concludes with a list of personality, experiential, and cognitive characteristics that best match the needs and abilities of gifted students. Often when people outside the field look at this list, they will remark that all students should have teachers like this. But is it true? Look at this list compiled across the work of Clark (1997), Gallagher (1994), and Davis and Rimm (1998) and decide whether these characteristics would be critical to the education of an average child or a child with special needs. Some characteristics, such as training in gifted education, high intellectual ability, expertise in a specific intellectual or talent area, genuine interest and liking for gifted learners may not be so directly relevant to all learners, but the remainder are.

- Extensive training in gifted education
- High degree of intelligence and intellectual honesty
- Expertise in a specific intellectual or talent area
- A genuine interest in and liking of gifted learners
- Recognition of the importance of intellectual development
- Strong belief in individual differences and individualization
- Highly developed teaching skill and knowledge of how to teach

A Parent's Perspective ■ By Frank Stuhr

I found the article on ability grouping by Karen Rogers to offer a reaffirming message to educators and parents on the benefits of grouping based on ability. Having four children with varying degrees of academic success and motivation, I can see practical examples of several of Dr. Rogers's observations.

One criticism of grouping has focused on the assumption that gifted role models would be excluded from classrooms with at-risk students. The contention is that this would somehow deprive less motivated students from identifying with and emulating higher achieving students. One of my children is very intelligent and very artistic but has never been motivated to achieve academically. He has been in both public and private schools, has been exposed to all levels of students over the years, and has consistently gravitated toward peers with similar interests. He admires artists and singers and others who share his passion. In fact, I think most students associate with others of similar interests. Athletes tend to congregate and socialize together, and scholars find common interests in social and academic venues. Individuals find role models and friends with common views. I do not feel that inclusion of gifted students into the general program would alter this dynamic.

I think one of the most significant conclusions alluded to in the article is that grouping works. Both high- and low-ability students achieve greater progress over the years with the performance grouping model than with heterogeneous grouping. My daughter had always performed well in grammar school. Not until she entered her GATE program in middle school was she challenged beyond her "comfort zone." I have noticed that in these classes, a healthy competitiveness among students develops which drives them to reach their potential. My son, on the other hand, is now in classes where we can closely track his progress and have daily communication with his teachers. The structure and teaching style of my son's classes meet his needs but would not apply to my daughter. In my family's experience, ability grouping has had an effective influence on my children's education.

FRANK STUHR lives with his wife and four children in Ventura, California. He is employed as a podiatrist in private practice with some involvement in clinical teaching. His 13-year-old daughter has been in the GATE program since third grade.

ILLUSTRATION BY KEN WATSON

- Self-directed in their own learning, with a love for new, advanced knowledge
- Level-headed and emotionally stable

Heath in 1997 canvassed gifted students to find out what they thought made a good teacher. Their list looks like a shopping list for all students, except for "moving through class materials quickly" and "consistent provision of accurate feedback."

- Patience
- Sense of humor
- Moves quickly through learning material
- Treats each person as an individual
- Doesn't have to be a "sage on the stage" all the time
- Consistently gives "accurate" feedback

What is being said here is that there probably is not a single paradigm for the "good" teacher. What makes the teacher of the gifted "good" or "effective" might be highly damaging to a low-level learner and vice versa.

Myth 4: When gifted students are grouped for instruction, this removes the role models at-risk students need to succeed and behave.
Reality: What decades of research on role models has told us, especially the work of Albert Bandura (1964) and Dale Schunk (1996), is that individuals are most likely to choose a "role model" among those whom they perceive to be at about their own level but experiencing some sort of success (attention, financial rewards, praise, friendship, etc.). A low-level student will not choose a gifted student as a role model because (a) he or she doesn't want to be like the gifted student or (b) he or she doesn't think it's possible to be like that—too much change would be involved.

Observing peers performing a task increases students' self-efficacy for learning....Peers who readily master skills may help teach skills to observing students, but may not have much impact on the self-efficacy of those students who experience learning difficulties....For the latter, students with learning difficulties who have mastered the skills may be excellent models. (Schunk, 1996, p. 113)

What happens when students are grouped with others of similar abilities and interests is most often a function of who becomes the role model in each classroom. It is just as likely that a charismatic severe underachiever might become the role model for anti-establishment behavior in a gifted class as a discipline problem might become the role model for anti-establishment behavior in a low-ability group. Again, there are factors other than the act of grouping that affect the learning climate in grouped as well as whole grouped or ungrouped classes.

Myth 5: Ability grouping is rigid: once you're in one group level, you can't get out.
Reality: There is a reality to this myth for one kind of grouping—tracking, also known as full-time ability grouping. If children are placed in a low or middle track, what chance would they have to acquire all they are supposed to learn in that track and on the side be picking up all they need to learn in order to be successful in the next highest track? It would be close to impossible for children to move up a track. However, lack of focus, underachievement, disciplinary issues, or a developmental plateau could all lead to children moving down a track. Hence, the permanence or rigidity of tracking seems to be a reality.

But as previous research has pointed out, there are many forms of ability grouping that do not seem to be so inflexible. Perfor-

PERSPECTIVES ON GROUPING

A Teacher's Perspective ■ By Shirley Ching

After a lifetime partnership with California schools, I've lived through the pendulum swings that define public education. Teaching became, for me, the thoughtful compilation of new ideas and discarded reforms. After 20 years of teaching the gifted in homogeneous and heterogeneous settings, I'm convinced that some grouping is essential for equity and effectiveness. The burden of proof is on us to save grouping from the next pendulum swing.

Though Rogers dismantles some of the most common myths about grouping, she doesn't prove the indispensability of the practice. In order to do so, she must show that the gifted have special needs which require grouping. In my experience, gifted learners often understand a concept best through abstract reasoning. Hands-on experiences muddle the big picture for some. Skipping the concrete and starting with the abstract may be indispensable to reach the gifted, but inappropriate for other students, and impossible to practice in a heterogeneous setting. To make her case, Rogers must document other needs of gifted students that grouping alone can satisfy.

On her tour of the research, Rogers fails to dispel the most disturbing myth—that grouping is anti-egalitarian and elitist. At times she appears to reinforce the myth. I can't imagine a world in which interactions with all echelons of society are limited to services received and rendered. Grouping is an accepted practice in our society. Athletes are assigned levels in school and out. Musicians, dancers, artists enroll in varying levels of classes based on both ability and achievement. The gifted are no different. The problem, I think, is that many see gifted placement as a status symbol instead of a vehicle to educate. Our responsibility is to rectify that view and not reward cooperative students or children of activist parents with misplacement in gifted classes. We do not remove underachieving gifted students who appear lazy or rebellious because they do not seem to deserve the special treatment of being grouped in classes for gifted students. Using grouping only when grouping is necessary for any subgroup will make it an egalitarian alternative.

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mance grouping for specific subject instruction, flexible within-class grouping, cluster grouping, cross-grade grouping, and pullout groups all rely on students' current levels of performance and what they already know about what is being taught as the criteria for group placement (Rogers, 1993). Each of these is defensible as a practice, because up-to-date assessment data are used to place children in the groups they "need" to be in for the best focused and appropriately paced and differentiated instruction. For all of these forms of grouping, the gifted have shown substantial academic effects, ranging from approximately one-third of a year's additional achievement to nearly three-fifths of a year's additional growth. For average and lower achieving groups, the academic effects have been smaller but positive. The key with any form of performance grouping, however, is to focus on what is being taught, not on who is being grouped. The studies since 1990 have pointed consistently to the following conclusions about performance grouping (Rogers, 1998):

1. Advanced students benefit academically more than low-ability students (e.g., Berge, 1990; Gamoran, Nystrand, Berends, & LePore, 1995; Goldring, 1990; Hooper, 1992; Richardson & Fergus, 1993).
2. Homogeneous groups are more beneficial academically for all abilities than heterogeneous grouping (Cohen & Lotan, 1995; Hacker & Rowe, 1993; Lou, Abrami, Spence, & Poulsen, 1996; Slate, Jones & Dawson, 1993).
3. Continuous progress alone (i.e., cross grading, mastery learning) makes no academic difference unless it is combined with a variety of instructional approaches (Hall & Cunningham, 1992; Veenman, 1995).
4. Small-group learning is academically more advantageous than whole-group learning (Hallinan, 1994; Jones & Carter, 1994). One study found this not to be true in teaching basic math facts: whole group drill and practice was found superior for retention (Mason & Good, 1993).
5. What is done when students are grouped (i.e., instructional quality, curriculum coverage, instructional time, class size) is more directly related to achievement than just being placed in a group (Kulik, 1992; Pallas, Entwisle, Alexander, & Stluka, 1994).
6. Low-ability students benefit academically when paired with a high-ability student but the converse is not true (Carter & Jones, 1994; Hooper, 1992).
7. Both high- and low-ability students benefit from more social interactions when grouped within a class with like-ability peers (Berge, 1990; Chauvet & Blatchford, 1993; Hacker & Rowe, 1993).

Myth 6: Low-ability students' self-esteem is irreparably damaged when they are placed with other low-ability students.
Reality: This myth was roundly rejected in Kulik & Kulik's multiple meta-analyses of the 1980s and early 1990s. In each synthesis they found that performance on paper and pencil measures of self-esteem was somewhat more positive for low-ability students in grouped classrooms, with a similar pattern also found for average-ability students. The explanations, although not documented at the time, were that these students were less likely to be intimidated by those who answered the teacher's questions more rapidly and were more likely to experience success when the instruction had been tailored to their needed pace and level of complexity.

Self-confidence, an aspect of self-esteem, has been studied in the decade since the Kuliks' work. Both the research teams of Carter and Jones (1994) and Fuligni, Eccles, and Barber (1995) have found that low-ability students tend to acquire more self-confidence in their abilities when in mixed-ability groups. This leaves us with a dilemma: their self-esteem is not damaged when grouped but their self-confidence improves when they are not grouped. Unfortunately, self-esteem is less high (but perhaps more realistic) for high-ability students when they are grouped but their self-confidence only improves when they are given challenges slightly beyond what they think they can do and then they succeed (Hoekman, 1998). This is not likely to happen when gifted students are placed in a mixed-ability group without the challenge and appropriate pacing they require.

Myth 7: Low-ability and average-ability students' achievement is lim-

See GROUPING, page 34

UP CLOSE with Karen Rogers

Gifted education has been an important part of Karen Roger's life from a very early time. She was born and raised on a farm in the San Joaquin Valley of California. Even though she attended a small school, it was part of the MGM (Mentally Gifted Minors) program established by California as its first program for gifted children. She recalls that Mr. Keeney, the principal of the school, taught the MGM classes.

Rogers went on to Berkeley to earn her bachelor's degree. It was a time of student protest and she had to cross the picket line to get to class—she couldn't afford not to go to class. She went to San Diego State University for her master's degree as well as her California teacher's credential and taught 1st, 2nd, 5th, and 6th grades in San Diego. Her first class, a combination of advanced first graders and regular second graders provided her next interest in gifted education. She observed that the first graders processed information so differently from the second graders. She needed to find out more about them as learners.

Her husband's work took them to Minnesota where Rogers earned a second master's degree as well as her Ph.D. Her original plan was to do her thesis on the effects of grouping of gifted children and collected all the material then available. Other factors dictated a change of topic, but the material on grouping was still waiting for analysis. The opportunity to delve deeper into the topic came when Joe Renzulli asked her to prepare the first monograph in the Research Based Decision Maker series shortly after the establishment of the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented. Since that first publication in 1990, Rogers has continued to update her research on grouping gifted children on a regular basis.

When asked about a goal for gifted education, Rogers replied that she would like to "figure out how we can offer gifted kids a daily, rigorous curriculum" going beyond pull-out or other minimal services. That remains a part of her endeavors in her teaching and research at the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis.

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STANDARDIZED TESTI
THE VILLAIN OR THE HERO?

By CAROLYN M. CALLAHAN

The continuing evolution of the reform movement has been accompanied by an increased emphasis on testing—both for assessing the outcomes of reform and for judging the degree to which schools and/or students have met accountability standards. The increased emphasis on tests, particularly as they are used in high-stakes accountability situations, has generated considerable debate. In this debate about testing, it seems easy to find the villains in the black hats and the good guys in the white hats.

However, scrutiny of the education literature reveals that the wearers of the black and white hats switch identities depending on the article one reads or the presentation one hears. In some articles, we see standardized testing held up as the bane of our existence and performance assessments touted as the best thing since sliced bread. In the political arena we hear that standardized tests, particularly in the form of standards assessment, are going to be the saviors of the educational system by raising the bar and giving teachers and students the

motivation to attain new heights of achievement. Even within the standardized-testing field the debate over the merits of objective assessments and performance assessments as reliable and valid means of assessment continues (Linn, 2000).

Further, within the general debate we can find more specific concerns about the effects of the standardized, high-stakes testing movement on particular populations ranging from culturally different students to low SES students and gifted students. It is quite true that within the field of gifted education we have relied heavily on standardized assessments in several ways. The identification of gifted students has traditionally relied very heavily on the results of standardized achievement tests, particularly in the areas of reading, mathematics, and language arts. Even though the use of standardized intelligence and achievement testing for identification of gifted students has been widely criticized by many for being culturally biased and a source of discriminatory policies (e.g., Davis & Rimm, 1998; Frazier, Garcia, & Passow, 1995), they are still widely used because of the very characteristics of standardized tests: standardization of the tasks, the administration, and the scoring of the tests; the opportunity to compare student performance to norms; reliability of results; and (in the case of objective tests) ease of scoring. Many programs for gifted students have used the results of standardized assessments as part of the evaluation of success of their program. In some cases, judgments are made on the basis of general achievement tests like the Stanford 9 or the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. Sometimes state or local test results are used. And sometimes results of specific standardized tests like the Advanced Placement exams or International Baccalaureate exams are used as standards against which program success is judged.

Clearly, the benefits or detriments in the use of any form of test or in the use of data from any particular test relates to the ways decision-makers use scores. Test scores that are perfectly valid for making one set of decisions or for one purpose may be useless, or even provide misleading information, in other settings. Except in those cases where obviously the test developer has not attended to the principles of good test construction, it is usually naive to ask, "Is this a good test?" or to claim, "That test is bad." To laud or to condemn assessment tools without looking at their characteristics and the ways in which decisions are made using test scores is unwarranted.

Potential Benefits in Standardized Assessments for the Field of Gifted Education

Standardized assessments have benefited the field of gifted education in two distinct ways. First, carefully developed instruments have provided us an opportunity to gather data on those gifted students who may annoy or confuse teachers leading them to miss the manifestations of ability and achievement or the learning disabilities which may have masked potential. The underachieving gifted child is often recognized when test scores on aptitude or standardized achievement tests belie the grades that have been assigned by teachers.

The development of standardized assessments in some states and as part of the New Standards Project has been predicated on the development of carefully considered outcome descriptors that suggest the importance of complex and in-depth understanding of the disciplines. In classrooms where teachers have been able to see the importance of reaching toward those goals for gifted students in lieu of the emptier process-oriented activity of many gifted classrooms, the students have benefited. These high quality standards have also provided a common language of the disciplines expressed in terms of the important concepts, principles, and generalizations of the disciplines that lend themselves to unbounded differentiation. Further, the authentic assessment of tasks developed as part of the New Standards Project demand a level of performance beyond the basics which integrates and extends learning and engages both the teacher and learner in sustained effort.

"One systemic and potentially dangerous effect of standardized tests stems from a mismatch between gifted students and curriculum that is offered"

Potential Negative Effects on Gifted Students and Gifted Programs

While the potential of the standards and the positive benefits of some assessments may benefit gifted learners and the classrooms where they learn, the current high-stakes testing movement to reliance on single-test scores for judging success has raised concerns about the impact of these assessments on the population of gifted students.

Psychometric Issues

One systemic and potentially dangerous effect of standardized tests stem from a mismatch between gifted students and curriculum that is offered (or should be offered) to gifted and talented students

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and the kinds of achievement objectives measured by many standardized assessment tools. This mis-match presents a validity issue for many standardized assessments—not in the degree to which they might measure the state-level goals and objectives for the average student, but in whether they measure appropriate outcomes for gifted and talented students. While these tests cannot be criticized for assessing the students' current level of performance, they may well be an inadequate measure of growth or accomplishment during a given year of instruction.

Not only does test validity depend on the particular use of the data from standardized tests, but the reliability of the tests for a given subgroup like the gifted is also affected by the fact that gifted students most often score at the extreme of the distribution of scores. Because gifted and talented students are screened and identified on the basis (at least partially) of scores on standardized assessments, then the gifted student population represents the highest scorers. This makes their scores subject to a phenomenon called regression to the mean. Simply put, students who score very high on one administration of a test are likely to have their score move toward the mean or center of the distribution on a second testing. This occurs because of error factors in testing. If a student has already given the correct answer to nearly every item on a test, then everything has been going right for the student. Not only has the student entered the testing situation with more knowledge, but all of the potential error factors (guessing, mismarking an answer, distractions, poor directions, unclear items, etc.) have not negatively affected his or her score. But during a retest situation with the same test or a parallel form, that student cannot really do any better and is more subject to the effects of those errors having a negative impact on scores—hence lower scores and less reliability (or consistency) for the measure.

A psychometric issue stemming from the ignorance of some educators lies in the expectations set for achievement measured by standardized assessments. In some California districts, administrators are setting the goal of having 90% of all Title I students achieve above the national median on a standardized achievement test within the next 10 years (Linn, 2000). While such blatant acceptance of the Lake Wobegon effect is not the fault of test manufacturers, it is indicative of the lack of understanding of test score distributions and potential misuses of test score data.

Educational Issues

Within the discussion of educational reform where standardized assessment plays a key role in both guiding the direction and development of reform efforts and in judging the effects of those efforts, the focus is most often on raising the bar for the general population or raising the test scores of the at-risk population. Note that the political rhetoric seldom is about achievement, but most often about the scores. And seldom do we hear any discussion of the population who is already at the bar or has surpassed the bar. And more sadly, the conversation in schools has changed from one of curriculum to one of numerical test scores. "Principals report there can be little discussion of children's development, of cultural relevance, of children's contributions to classroom knowledge and interactions, or of those engaging sidebar experiences that are at the margins of official curriculum where children often do their best learning" (McNeil, 2000, p. 730). Instead students may even spend valuable instructional time in pep rallies where "students are drilled on such strategies as the pep rally cheer 'Three in a row? No, No, No'" (McNeil, 2000, p. 730). (The cheer is based on the advice that seldom are three answers in a row on a multiple choice test the same option.)

Some argue that high-stakes testing using standard assessment results in increased learning as evidenced by test score improvement. But other evidence contradicts that finding. For example high school students report answering questions on a reading assessment without reading the passage, but by matching words in the responses to words in the passage (McNeil, 2000).

> Meyer (1996) has argued:
> In a high-stakes accountability system, teachers and administrators are likely to exploit all avenues to improved measured performance. For example, teachers may "teach narrowly to the test." For tests that are relatively immune to this type of corruption, teaching to the test could induce teachers and administrators to adopt new curriculums and teaching techniques much more rapidly than they otherwise would (p.140).

However, Linn (2000) counters that it is "unclear that there is either the know-how or the will...to develop tests that are immune to this corruption" (p. 12). As a consequence, we see teachers who feel that the directives to improve test scores constrain their ability to teach a full and complex curriculum. "Content areas assessed for a high-stakes accountability system receive emphasis while those that are left out languish" (Linn, 2000). Not only do some areas languish, there is considerable evidence that only those objectives specifically measured by the assessment tool are given any attention.

Teachers faced with the pressure of being held accountable for (and often having their competence judged by) the number of students who reach a minimum performance level are faced with decisions that may lead them to focus their instructional efforts on those most likely to make the difference in achieving those goals. Those who have already reached the goal are given less attention because the teacher can count on their performance. Most effort is directed at the marginal students who the teacher believes can be brought up to the level of competence with the focused attention on instruction. One teacher categorized the students in his classroom as "those who have it and don't need me, the kids I can bring up to 'proficient,' and the 'no chance' kids." He admitted he would concentrate and expend his efforts on drills aimed at the middle group.

Unfortunately, the traditional standardized achievement test fails in its emphasis on isolated skills and bits of knowledge with little attention to abstract, transfor-

mational, complex, and interdisciplinary notions. In a recent research study we conducted in which we were introducing teachers to high-level, complex curriculum based on national curriculum standards, we were told, "We would like to do that and maybe after the [state] testing is over in May we can, but right now we have to teach basic skills only." When pressured on the issue of offering the tasks we were proposing to students who had already mastered the skills of the state assessment at the given grade level, the teachers responded that they could not do that: "Everyone needs to have the same opportunity to learn." Sometimes that interpretation is self-imposed, but there is considerable evidence of external pressure (McNeil, 2000).

The overreliance on a single test score based on indirect assessment of competence (multiple-choice, true-false, or fill-in-the-blank tasks are not the ways in which real people faced with real tasks demonstrate competence) may be leading students to (1) measure their self-worth through a limited and inappropriate lens, (2) not gain competence in using knowledge in arithmetic and engaging problem-solving, and (3) an inability to see the relevance and importance of learning in school.

Some would argue that the solution is in stretching the limits of the test boundaries to include the levels of excellence that represent the highest performance we might expect from our gifted and talented. Not only is there little evidence that any traditional assessments have achieved this goal, Duke (1998) has pointed out the futility of our attempts to define that level, "Excellence, by its nature, is open-ended. It exists on the frontiers of individual achievement. The idea of *standards of excellence* is an oxymoron" (p.689).

Unintended Consequences for Poor and Minority Gifted Students

While we may lament the degree to which the educational experience of gifted children from the dominant culture may be limited by the narrowing of the curriculum in response to high-stakes tests with a constricted universe of content, the effects on gifted minority students may be even more devastating. "[M]any schools replace the regular curriculum in minority students' classrooms with test-prep materials that have virtually no value beyond practicing for the test. The scores go up in those classrooms but the quality goes down" (McNeil, 2000, p. 730). How can we expect minority children who have been drilled in low-level basic skills and learning-fragmented information, to learn the cognitive skills and the high-level concepts that would lead them to high-end performance in the disciplines, or to levels of performance that would result in identification as gifted?

Ethical and Moral Consequences

Recent discoveries of teacher and administrator cheating on state assessments (Smith, 2000) presents a final dilemma to parents of students who witness or hear of such behavior. What is the message to students who see the adults in their lives respond to the pressures of the testing situation with unethical behavior?

What Can We Do? A brief review of practices and actions that might alleviate some of the concerns:

At the State and Local Policy Level

- Advocate for setting state and local standards that reflect a high level of complex understanding in the disciplines. Do not settle for standards that reflect isolated facts and low-level learning.
- Advocate for multiple types of assessments as part of any high-stakes assessment plan.
- Reduce the pressures of year-by-year, teacher-by-teacher assessments (Linn, 2000).

At the School Division Level

- Carefully scrutinize the messages that test preparation activities give.
- Carefully examine the messages that "rewards" give. Are we only willing to learn or perform if there is a pizza party at the end of the journey? How do we teach the value of learning for its own sake if the only measure of worth is a score on an achievement test?
- Encourage staff to incorporate authentic assessment and authentic learning into their instructional plans. Knowledge will be retained for longer periods of time because it will be meaningfully incorporated into a student's cognitive framework *and* students will be more engaged in learning.
- Help teachers see the value of developing the full potential of all students. They will need encouragement to not be satisfied with minimal performance.

At the Classroom Level

- Do not allow a single test score to be the realm for your instruction. Quality standards should guide curriculum decisions, but be sure all students are engaging in the highest level of the standard that their potential allows.
- Develop authentic tasks and assessments to supplement traditional forms of assessment.
- Always teach beyond the minimums. Know the capability of your students and stretch the students to the very limits of their potential.
- Interpret test scores wisely and interpret the scores in light of the instrument from which they are derived.
- Advocate at the local and state level for appropriate and meaningful standards and assessments.

Closing Thought

While the pressures of accountability standards and assessments are likely to continue, we cannot allow ourselves to settle for the role of victims. Our knowledge of the ways in which children learn meaningfully, of cognitive science, and of the importance of authentic learning and assessment must be continually brought to the political table so that policy-makers can come to understand the importance of a more balanced approach to judging the outcomes of instruction.

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Synchronizing Gifted Education with General Education

There needs to be a constructive tension between gifted and general education

BY SANDRA KAPLAN

Synchronizing gifted education with general education does not mean abdicating support for gifted education or blurring the unique qualities that identify it. The concept of synchronizing gifted education with general education creates controversy more among educators and parents of gifted children than among general education educators. Fear of losing the status and impact it has taken gifted education so long to gain, fear of distorting the mission of gifted education, and fear of being absorbed by general education work against the acceptance of synchronization between these two programs.

The strength of any educational program is the degree to which it can both achieve independence and accept dependence in order to fulfill its goals. The "test" of gifted education in today's society—where education is seen as failing, where a teacher shortage is inevitable, where academic success is perceived to be too difficult for students to attain, and where test scores are equated with success—is its ability to synchronize with general education in order that both can satisfy the needs of all students.

Isolation vs. Integration

Today's educational demands seem to determine the degree of flexibility gifted education must have in relationship with general education. Too much isolation from general education can weaken gifted education and, conversely, too much integration with general education can obscure the distinct purpose and attributes of gifted education. Survival of gifted education in both contemporary and future educational environments requires defined degrees of isolation and integration between general and gifted education.

Gifted education has struggled to maintain its position and alignment with general education. There have been instances when isolation or separation from general education has contributed to the identity and individuality of gifted education and have even sustained the life of gifted programs. Examples of the benefits derived by maintaining distance from general education are seen in school districts where money and space are issues. When separate money is earmarked by the state to support gifted education, districts are more likely to provide classrooms, personnel, and resources designated specifically to promote the welfare and advancement of gifted students. Budgetary entries solely designated for the gifted, which often are the result of years of advocacy, illustrate how separation can be an asset rather than a detriment.

Isolation from general education is most effective for gifted education when decisions regarding curriculum and instruction:

- are prescriptive
- are directed toward all students
- demand general rather than specific professional development
- reinforce conventional responses to cognitive and affective goals of schooling.

Maintaining programmatic distance from situations in which general education is stressing normed and at-grade-level expectations is vital. The consequences of affiliation could be misunderstood as affirmation. Under such circumstances gifted education's isolation from general education may be viewed as a positive.

Integration with general education implies recognizing shared or overlapping goals between general and gifted education. The integration of gifted with general education is most appropriate when decisions regarding curriculum and instruction:

- focus on furthering high-end learning
- support individual differences for both students and teachers
- inquire about the meaning and definition of academic challenge.

Demonstrating how gifted education diligently supports diversity among students is an example of a mutually held goal of both gifted and general education, and further illustrates the benefits of integration between the educational programs.

The quantity and type of isolation and integration to be forged between gifted and general education must be based on decisions which satisfy the needs, interests, and abilities of gifted students. Advocates striving to meet the academic and affective needs of gifted students must ask themselves the question: when does collaboration or integration between gifted and general education provide greater opportunities for gifted students and when is independence or isolation between these programs most effective?

Standardized Testing Related to Differentiated Curriculum

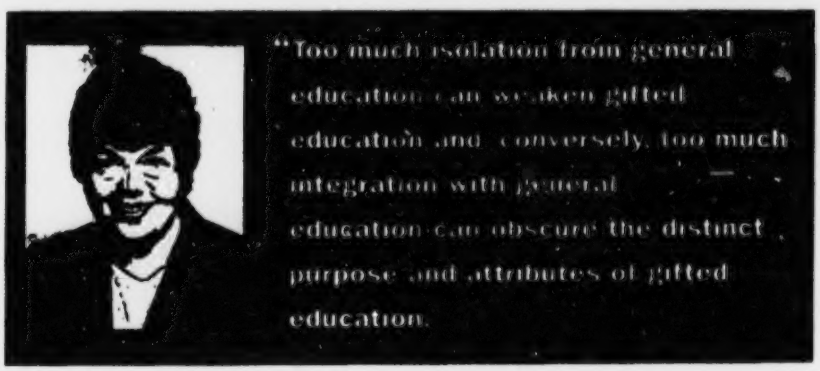
The influences of standardized testing on the development and implementation of a differentiated curriculum are simultaneously helpful and harmful to the education of gifted students.

The harmful aspect of the impact of standardized testing on a differentiated curriculum occurs when teachers believe that favorable test scores are solely dependent on the administering of the basic core curriculum and that deviations from the core will lead to test scores that are lower than what one expects from gifted students. The teachers' need to teach to the test or adhere primarily to the regular curriculum often outweighs their need to differentiate the curriculum. The perceived negative outcome discourages teachers from differentiating curriculum, or they use this perception as an excuse to absolve them from differentiating the core curriculum.

Standardized testing has caused educators to (a) define the outcomes of a basic or core curriculum, and (b) specify the nature and scope of the core or basic curriculum. These two factors necessitate defining a means/ends relationship between gifted and general education: the need to teach the curriculum that will be tested and the differentiated curriculum that is expected for gifted students. Determining the position of gifted education as a means (the curriculum and learning needed to attain designated outcomes) or an end (the stated outcome to be achieved) is dependent on the nature and scope of the gifted program and district in which it resides. In some situations, gifted education serves the students best as a means to the end. Teachers can justify a differentiated curriculum as the route to attaining the knowledge and skills correlated to the core curriculum measured by the standardized test. As a means to the end, teachers can assure administrators and parents that compliance with the district's demands for the gifted can be met without forfeiting the core curriculum and its affiliation to the standardized test.

Designating the differentiated curriculum as an end rather than a means is another choice for educators. It demands a greater degree of understanding about curriculum. As an end, the differentiated curriculum becomes the goal and the core curriculum one of the means to the end. Naming the differentiated curriculum as an end fulfills teachers' and parents' concerns to attend to the gifted, whereas administrators are apt to question the perceived secondary position of the core curriculum. However, the argument about the readiness of the gifted due to prior knowledge and ability to learn more quickly provides the justification for the differentiated curriculum as an end in itself. Regardless of the position (means or ends) given to the core curriculum or the differentiated curriculum, the concept of deferment of either curriculum is unacceptable for gifted students. Teachers who defer the differentiated curriculum until the testing date comes and goes place gifted students at risk in the same way that teachers who defer the core curriculum for the differentiated curriculum place gifted students at risk.

Deciding that a differentiated curriculum will be the means to the end rather than an end in itself, shifts the curricular emphasis enabling educators of the gifted to accommodate both the regularity and expectations of the core or basic and differentiated curriculum. The fear of jeopardizing gifted students' attainment of high scores and the fear of a differentiated curriculum diminishing the value or importance of the core or basic curriculum can be resolved when the core curriculum is the end and the differentiated curriculum becomes the means to the end.


"Too much isolation from general education can weaken gifted education and conversely, too much integration with general education can obscure the distinct purpose and attributes of gifted education.

Prescribed Curriculum

Curriculum programs demanding teachers' strict adherence to a step-by-step guide to instruct the curriculum serve as inhibitors to the design and implementation of a differentiated curriculum. Given a prescribed curriculum, teachers of the gifted are perplexed about when, where, and how to incorporate the needs of gifted students into it. Many publishers warn that deviations from the pre-

scribed curriculum outline will be deleterious to the desired outcome. In addition, administrators' demands that lesson plans adhere strictly to the curriculum as it is prescribed, inhibit teachers' willingness to promote interdisciplinary learning through independent study. Rather than attempting to reconcile the prescribed and differentiated curricular demands, teachers often acquiesce to one curriculum or the other, or simply let the most dominate curriculum reign. Neither of these positions is appropriate.

Several techniques allow teachers to adhere to the specifications of the prescribed curriculum while attending to a differentiated curriculum. These techniques include "paralleling" or teaching two curriculums, the prescribed in tandem with the differentiated. Another technique is "clustering" or using the core curriculum's concepts and skills as the centerpiece while the differentiated curriculum's concepts and skills are used to reinforce the core. These strategies are effective and efficient methods by which to link both curriculums without sacrificing either of them.

Identification of Gifted Students

The need for identification and the process used to identify gifted children have always been fraught with concerns and inequities. Who should be tested, what instruments should be used, and how the identification process should be reflective of the school district's population are questions that consistently emerge and are debated. Today, while everyone agrees that the identification process must be modified to respond to the linguistic, academic, cultural, and economic diversity among students, there is also a concern that modification may lower the standards for entrance into programs for gifted children and the services they include. An argument can then be made that this could decrease the appropriateness of services for those perceived to be "truly gifted."

ILLUSTRATION BY JON PORTER

The support for inclusiveness seems to spark the opposing factor of exclusiveness. The political correctness of supporting diversity can give way to a new form of "identification prejudice." This identification prejudice revolves around the concept of maintaining a gifted program that does not become tainted with students or factors that alter existing concepts of who gifted individuals are or what the curriculum and services for gifted students should be. For example, it is not unusual for a teacher or parent of an immigrant emergent English-language learner to question the degree of risk involved in the placement of this student in the existing gifted program including its differentiated curriculum. In most cases, the student is expected to perform in an established gifted program and adjust to the norm of that program.

The real issue is that altering the existing gifted program creates prejudicial concern on the part of parents and students whose expectations for a gifted program have been shaped over the years and see alterations in the program as the causes and effects of responding to diversity. Threats from parents to leave public education for private schools which do attend to gifted children intimidate those attempting to comply with the recognized and contemporary demands of the diversity of today's population.

Combating identification prejudice is most effective when educators and parents recognize that gifted students are diverse. Educators of the gifted need to discuss and implement the concept of developmentally appropriate differentiated curriculum. They must consider how to teach, not just to expect that gifted children are innately ready for a differentiated curriculum. They must become aware that contemporary literature supports the concept that it is not enough that we merely recognize potential in gifted children, but that we must develop it.

Shortage of Teachers

The contemporary national crisis of the lack of qualified new teachers could have a significant impact on the choice of teachers of the gifted. Traditionally, teachers who have proven their academic and pedagogical prowess have been selected as those most capable of teaching gifted students. In addition, teachers who have a sufficient number of units or attained a certificate or credential to teach the gifted are assigned to the gifted program. However, these traditional indicators are less likely to be honored or recognized when teachers are hired with emergency credentials and the teaching population is represented by increasing numbers of novice teachers.

There are alternative methods of selecting teachers of the gifted, but they are often rejected by conventional educators of the gifted. However, even teachers without extensive classroom experience could meet the criteria to teach the gifted if greater emphasis were given to what the teachers can offer to gifted students and a differentiated curriculum. For example, a new teacher who has spent five years as an architect offers background experiences which can support a differentiated curriculum equal to—or perhaps even more appropriate to—the education of gifted students than a teacher who merely offers a certain number of years taught.

A second alternative answer to the question, "Who should or will teach the gifted?" is to insist that knowledge about the gifted and the design and implementation of differentiated curriculum become integral features of "beginning teacher training." Emergency credential teachers need basic understandings of how to teach; teaching the gifted should be a basic area of learning for these teachers. The integration of teaching the gifted within the new teacher training modules also would allow the spill-over effect from gifted to general education, thus enhancing the new teachers' abilities to provide for all students.

General education and gifted education cannot coexist as adversaries nor can they maintain a relationship that is consistently amicable. There needs to be a constructive tension between gifted and general education causing each to reassess, redefine, and reaffirm the means by which they respond to their constituents—the students. This constructive tension between general and gifted education should be the catalyst that causes both programs to invent and implement curriculum and instruction that further the goals for which each strives. General education should improve because of its relationship to gifted education and gifted education should improve because of its relationship to general education.

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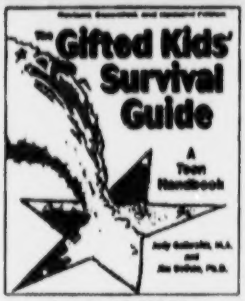

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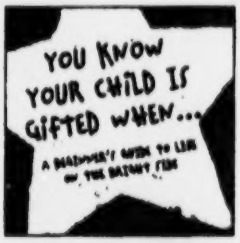

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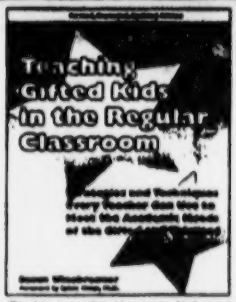

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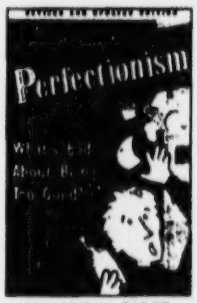

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GROUPING, continued from page 25

ited by the groups into which they are placed.

Reality: As pointed out earlier, Slavin's (1993) best evidence synthesis of the research on regrouping by performance level for specific instruction found slight positive gains for low- and average-ability groups when the curriculum itself was appropriately differentiated for these groups. The effects were zero when differentiation could not be documented. Thus, this myth could be true if instruction is not monitored, but it would be wrong to believe that the grouping itself limits achievement. As the more recent research has shown, smaller groups are superior to bigger groups for overall achievement (Cohen & Lotan, 1995; Lou et al., 1996), and homogeneous groups are superior to heterogeneous groups for overall achievement, class participation, and pro-academic behavior (Hacker & Rowe, 1993; Hooper, 1992).

The goal of schools must be to develop the potential of all students as far as possible. We must never choose an instructional management or delivery strategy that limits any child's potential. It is clear, however, that the act of grouping itself is not limiting. Care must be taken when like-ability grouping is used that the curriculum and the instructional delivery practices are appropriate to the group and aimed slightly beyond what students at that performance level think they are capable of—in Vygotsky's "Zone of Proximal Development"—if we are to make the most of the potential in any group.

Myth 8: Too much time is spent on discipline and behavior modification in low-ability groups.

Reality: The argument here is that low-ability groups become behavioral landmines and that teachers must be disciplinarians first and teachers last. Most interestingly, Jeanie Oakes' study did not find significant differences in the amount of instructional time expended when low and high tracks in junior and senior high schools were compared (1985), but the expectations for homework time expenditures were significantly different (42 minutes on average for high tracks vs. 14 minutes for low tracks). Is the myth, then, more an issue of teacher expectations than a grouping issue? Do teachers generally assume that low-achieving students are more likely to misbehave and act out and likewise assume that higher achieving students will not? Perhaps the type of disciplinary or behavioral issue differs in differing grouping levels, but the time spent on discipline and behavior modification is not discrepant. More recently, Chauvet and Blatchford (1995) have found that subjects placed in random mixed-ability groups performed significantly less well than those in either friendship groups or like-ability groups.

Myth 9: Without brighter students in a class, the quality of discussion and pro-academic norms go way down.

Reality: The "quality" of a discussion is a perception of the teacher, who may enjoy having a higher level of thinking going on for personal pleasure. Such discussion, however, may be very intimidating and alienating to lower level students in the class whose pace of learning is considerably slower (Start, 1995) and whose capacity for using higher order thinking may be more limited and infrequent (Nasca, 1980). This brings us to the issue of what purpose gifted students serve in the school system. Are they there to raise the average of the school on measures of school performance and mastery? Are they there to teach those who are struggling with the regular curriculum and its mastery? Are they there to make the teacher's job easier or more pleasurable?

When we think clearly about this, gifted students are there to learn, not to be exploited for the benefit of others. This means that these students' curriculum needs to be compacted in recognition of what they have already mastered, and they need exposure to advanced knowledge and skills at a considerably faster pace and with less review and practice than provided for students of other ability levels. With this new knowledge and skill, they need to apply and produce at higher levels of complexity and abstraction than other students. Compacting could certainly take place in a heterogeneous setting, but the difficulties of appropriate pacing and variable frequency of complex, abstract applications make the heterogeneous setting an impractical placement for most gifted students if their potential is to be fully developed.

The New Realities

Most of the research that has taken place since my foundational paper in 1991 has come to the same conclusions we have seen in this discussion of myths and realities, but three new patterns of research on grouping are emerging and it will be interesting to see what they add to our understanding of the merits of grouping for all ability levels.

Pattern 1. *Mixed-ability groups have "mixed" results.*

Dyads of low- and high-ability students are now being studied rather than small groups. Thus far, the researchers who have looked at this in the six studies I have found, conclude that the low-ability students speak out more, behave more appropriately, and stay on task more but with no differences in overall individual achievement. The high-ability dyad members gain little from the interaction (e.g., Cohen & Lotan, 1995; Jones & Carter, 1994). Hence if our goal is to socialize low-ability students, dyads work. If our goal is to improve their academic achievement, dyads are not the answer. For neither goal are dyads appropriate for high-ability students.

Pattern 2: *Like-ability groups produce higher academic effects for gifted learners than mixed-ability groups.*

A variety of studies since 1991 have come to this conclusion, from comprehensive syntheses of research (e.g., Goldring, 1992; Lou et al., 1996; Rogers, 1998). There just doesn't seem to be any way around the fact that gifted learners do better in every respect when they are placed together with others who are performing at their levels and share their interests and abilities. At the same time, the achievement effects for other ability levels are not so dramatic or definitive (Richardson & Fergus, 1993). Alternatives to like-ability groups have not produced earth-shaking results and more research and experimentation needs to take place to find the best alternatives for these students (students of ability levels other than gifted). At some point, however, educators will have to weigh effort against outcome. Grouping lessens a teacher's efforts to help students master what they have not accomplished by homogenizing pacing and complexity needs. Hence, it is a fairly easy means for developing the potential of gifted learners. The academic gains are substantial and documented. What we want, however, are substantial effects for all students. This means time-intensive individualization/tutoring/mentoring efforts will be required for these other levels of ability. What should not happen, however, is to eliminate performance grouping for gifted students when it does get us where we need to be with academic outcomes.

Pattern 3: *Smaller groupings for instruction produce higher academic effects for all students than whole-class instruction.*

Only one study in recent years has suggested

benefits for whole-class instruction: when it is used for drill and repetition of low-level convergent skills, such as math computation. The direct instruction research of the late 1970s reached similar conclusions. The question, then, is how much of what we aim to teach students in schools today is low level and convergent? If one looks at standards from state to state, the aim has consistently been to move toward higher order learning, patterns, and concepts rather than details and facts.

Many educators have used time as the explanatory factor among differing performance levels for students: some students need more time to learn than others. If this is so, then students will need to be placed in smaller groupings according to the amount of time they need to master the standards. And with standards becoming more and more high end, the need for adequate time to master them becomes more and more critical. We can't expect the majority of students to sit around while the slowest ones begin to master what all can learn. This would fly in the face of full potential development for all. More experimentation must take place with what the composition of these small groupings should look like. Will these be friendship groups rather than like-ability groups? Are friendship groups the same thing as like-ability groups (do we choose others to be our friends based on the similarity of their abilities and interests to ours)? Do dyads prove to be more academically effective than groups of three or four? Do single-gender groups change the complexion of achievement in some subjects, such as math and science?

Our work on the grouping issue and how it impacts gifted children is far from done. We have a strong research base for our current practices, but we also have some responsibility for contributing to an understanding of grouping practices' effects on the achievement of all students, regardless of ethnic origin, socioeconomic class, ability, motivation, and performance levels. Perhaps there are even more effective ways to manage the instruction of gifted learners. Let's be on the cutting edge in finding those ways.

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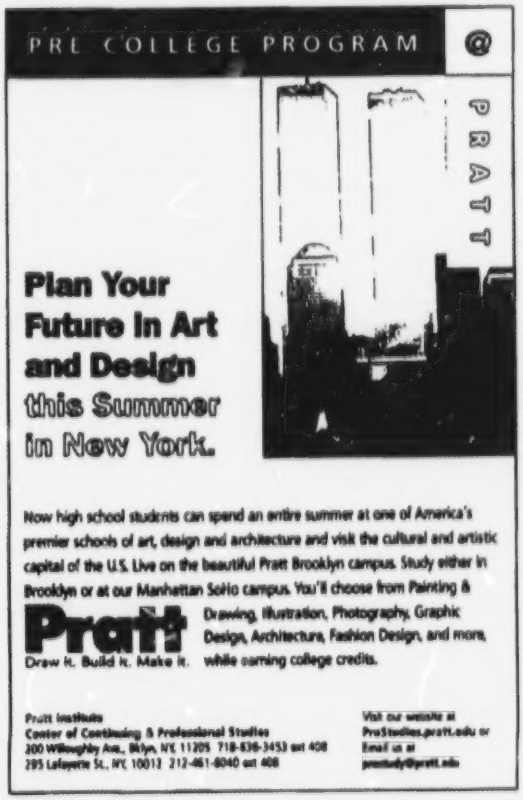
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UP from Downtime

By MARY S. PFEIFER

With the increased use of computer applications, fax machines, cell phones, and pagers for quickened communications, none of us has avoided system downtimes. "Downtime" occurs because the system cannot handle your request and the requests of other users simultaneously. As a result the system must assign a wait time. Building our tolerance for inevitable downtime is often difficult to negotiate. For some of us, waiting creates frustration and anxiety—a kind of road rage on the information highway. For others, downtime is a welcomed timeout—a kind of relaxed oasis on the same highway. However, and most important, downtime assures us that we should not expect the system to work perfectly and that none of us will get the job done as planned. Recently during a system downtime, I imagined a parallel downtime existing in school classrooms.

Actually, the classroom phenomenon of downtime is not new. Every year, teachers have supported downtime in the classroom. Students have accepted and practiced downtime. Parents and community have continued to fully fund downtime. So, what's significant about the occurrence of downtime in the classroom? Would repeated downtime in a school classroom be dysfunctional and wasteful? What effect would its prevalence have on students' education?

A Little Inquiry

To understand the effects of downtime in the classroom on an individual student, I engaged the assistance of a secondary student for whom I served as a mentor, tutor, and intellectual provocateur. This student was probably the most gifted student among those I have tutored. She was attending a secondary school that touted its differentiated curriculum and instruction, its integrated content focus, and its freedom to accelerate learning in meeting the needs of each student. I asked her to help me explore the phenomenon of downtime by collecting data in her classroom over a one-month period.

For purposes of this study, downtime was defined as any period of time during classroom instruction and guided practice when a teacher assigned the student to wait. Assigned downtime (ADT) would be identified by such prompts as "since you're finished with your work, why don't you sit quietly and read a book or something" or "let's have a free day tomorrow because it's the end of the week." The student investigator designed a data collection vehicle that would not only record the incidence of assigned downtime but included the length of time for each ADT. We sampled how much ADT this student was experiencing in her classroom during the month.

Results

During the twenty school days of the month studied, the student was assigned ADT daily. The length of the assigned downtime ranged from the shortest interval of 10 minutes to the longest interval of an entire school day. We did not count the school counselor's suggestion that because the student was so far ahead in math, she should sit out math instruction for the year. Given this school's philosophy and organization, and this student's academic achievement, attendance, and positive attitude, a significant amount of downtime had

been assigned. Extrapolating the data collected to reflect nine months of a school year, we determined that two years (18 months) of her high school education could be chalked up to ADT. Her high school education could have stopped at the end of 10th grade since all that remained was ADT. The student used this data to launch a search for a school that would meet her intellectual and emotional needs. Some students may find the amount of ADT is a break from challenging expectations and, therefore, put forth the minimum efforts required to get by. Others may need a series of breaks in the day to sustain focus and effort. Still others, like this student, may consider ADT a waste of time and talent while needing more depth and breadth in their curriculum and instruction. My student investigator commented, "What happened to 'be all you can be'?"

Up From Down

Several recommendations emerged from this little inquiry.

1. Students need to be aware of the amount of time they are assigned by teachers or aides to do nothing. Once students are aware that doing nothing is not challenging, self-advocacy is required. Students need to be equipped with the skills to self-advocate with school counselors and classroom teachers in a tactful, yet assertive manner to decrease ADT and to increase learning opportunities and expectations of performance. Parents and guardians will need to lend their children varying degrees of support in dealing with ADT.
2. Students need to be prepared for inevitable ADT, taking responsibility for their own learning. ADT allows students to focus on their interests, curiosities, and need for learning more. With the availability of personalized learning plans and goals, resources and materials, as well as teachers' support for higher expectations, students are able to utilize their time for greater inquiry and personal satisfaction.
3. Classroom teachers and aides should monitor their randomly assigned downtime in the course of a school day. Beyond the ADT frequency factor, practitioners must explore the effects of assigned downtime on individual students as well as others in the classroom. What message does ADT give students about academic and behavioral expectations, use of resources, respect for the intellect, and the value of an education?
4. Classroom teachers and aides must take time to know each of their student's needs so that they are challenged to be all that they can be. Like the data collector in this inquiry, students are often seen as able learners who will succeed no matter what happens in school. Left often to float, gifted and talented students are denied a fair share of the educational resources and opportunities. Reducing ADT teaches students that learning can be personalized, requires inquiry and resources outside the schoolroom, and honors the pursuit of "expertness."
5. Any amount of ADT is not automatically assumed to be a flawed practice. Indeed, any worker needs a few breaks in the day in order to stay fresh and focused. The amount of ADT is different for different individuals; therefore, too much ADT or too little ADT is relative to the individual.

Fortunately, this little inquiry has produced many more inquiries needing attention. How prevalent is ADT in the classroom? How does ADT affect the education of average or below average students? Do teachers know how to fill in the blanks of downtime for students? Finally, if I use my system's downtime to generate these kinds of ideas, results, and reflections, I too will be up from downtime.

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Advocating for Gifted Girls

BY JOAN FRANKLIN SMUTNY

This column will focus on a variety of groups within the gifted community which are underrepresented for a variety of reasons: language and cultural barriers, inadequate search and identification programs, racial or other biases, physical or mental challenges which mask their giftedness. In future issues we may focus on a particular group in more depth; this column will serve as a means of awareness and provide follow up resources.

Gifted girls need the watchful care of a parent or teacher to help them surmount the social pressures and gender bias that can hamper their development. Barbara Kerr wrote that our society has "made it the norm for gifted women to lead an average life, and gifted women have largely adapted to that norm" (1994, p. 171). To stop this "average life" from becoming the "norm," informed parents and teachers must advocate for gifted girls, taking a more active role in their growth and education.

Research has proven that the process of adapting to a lower standard of achievement begins in childhood and, as a rule, gifted girls are quick to absorb the subtle messages around them. "Do well but don't be too assertive." "Don't raise your hand too much." "Don't ask too many questions." "Don't be too forceful about what you think." "Don't...Don't...Don't." By age 11, many gifted girls feel unsure of their potential, minimize or hide their talents, and often perform below their ability. If unchecked, this pattern of underachievement can continue through adulthood.

Finding Gifted Girls

The first crucial step in advocating for gifted girls is to identify their talents. Examining tests, homework assignments, or other conventional measures may not provide enough information. If a teacher notices keen insight in a girl she thought was average, she can look more closely at her work, behavior, and attitude. She can determine the circumstances in which these qualities appeared, the class activities the girl appears most comfortable doing, and the learning styles she prefers when tackling assignments. The teacher can also seek out alternative means to identify her talents—such as portfolios, interviews with the family, and observations by community members.

Helping Gifted Girls in School

Teachers and parents have a role to play in freeing gifted girls from the negative impact of gender stereotyping and social pressures at school. The following situations may hinder girls' full participation in the classroom:

- greater recognition of boys' abilities than girls' (expressed in school, media, and home)
- greater expectation of math and science achievement in boys
- encouragement of submissive and obedient behavior of girls
- discouragement of girls expressing strong opinions
- less detailed feedback for work done by girls than that done by boys
- discouragement of leadership roles for girls
- highly competitive activities that girls find intimidating
- sex-role stereotyping in the curriculum and social dynamics of the classroom

Teachers can help gifted girls by incorporating some of the following practices into the day's instruction:

1) Respond to gifted girls' work with more specific suggestions and comments. Be supportive and positive, but not generic in the feedback offered.
2) Minimize competition. Gifted girls often back off in highly competitive situations. Learning groups, hands-on activities, and independent projects help them to learn without feeling a conflict between their talents and their need to belong.
3) Use learning contracts to enable gifted girls to advance. Learning contracts, commonly used in curriculum compacting, provide opportunities for talented female students to set their own pace and create projects that interest them. This is especially useful for female students who do not want to draw attention to themselves.
4) Integrate creative/imaginative with critical/analytical thinking. Gifted girls sometimes abandon subjects (such as math or science) because the instruction is too linear. Many prefer to use imaginative as well as analytical approaches to solving problems and processing information.
5) Use role-playing. When conducted sensitively, role-playing allows a flexibility in self-expression that benefits gifted girls. Some girls find that becoming "someone else" gives them a sense of independence and freedom to act more boldly than they would ordinarily.
6) Provide leadership opportunity. Leadership can often be intimidating for gifted girls. But once teachers understand their particular strengths and talents, they can gradually introduce opportunities for them to assume more leadership. They could, for example, help coordinate a group project or act as resident experts in a subject they love and know well. Teachers and parents need to be sensitive to the fact that this kind of role may be unfamiliar to gifted girls. They may need special support to overcome their timidity and self-doubt.

Encouraging gifted girls without focusing too much attention on them can often be a balancing act. Gifted minority girls have a particular challenge negotiating the tension between the need to be loyal to their peer group (who may see school achievement as a "white thing") and the need to fulfill themselves as talented people. Unfortunately, some of these gifted girls find the social and emotional costs too great and prefer to be invisible among a community they know and love rather than suffer the isolation they think will accompany a successful academic performance. They require particularly determined advocates who can help them negotiate the conflict they feel between their need to belong and their need to fulfill themselves.

Role Models for Gifted Girls

Gifted girls need constant exposure to the accomplishments of women. Underrepresented in the curriculum and the media, female achievement is still something of a silent history. I have found women's biographies a superb catalyst for discussions about gender roles and female talent (see source listed on National Women's History Project). Girls in my writing workshops often focus on biographies in their own essays, particularly on the obstacles prominent women have had to overcome to reach their goals. When talented girls learn how women have contributed to a variety of fields (including those dominated by males), they feel empowered to pursue their interests more confidently. When talented girls also understand that girls and women who want to do more than the "norm" cannot avoid difficulties along the way, they will be better equipped to deal with them.

Gifted girls sometimes abandon subjects such as math or science because the instruction is too linear.

Both teachers and parents can make a difference in this area. Reviewing sources and materials in the environment, they can consider some of these questions:

- Do the toys, books, clothes, games, posters in the home or school environment encourage gender roles or project females as the "weaker sex"?
- Do gifted girls have access to stories, biographies, pictures, media that portray girls and women in a wide range of roles?
- What is the subtext of different materials girls are exposed to (e.g., games, toys, books, learning aids)?
- How might I as a parent or teacher provide materials that offer alternative views and insights into female ability and accomplishment?

Some advocates find opportunities to strengthen themselves in the process of helping a struggling gifted girl. They wonder, "In what ways am I a strong female model for my daughter or student? Do I express myself with freedom and confidence?" This line of questioning can lead them to become models of strength and resiliency—able to empower gifted girls through difficult times.

RESOURCES

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JOAN FRANKLIN SMUTNY is director of the Center for Gifted, National-Louis University, Evanston, IL.

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When Good Grades are Bad

How Can Teachers Help Parents Keep a Balanced View of Achievement?

BY CAROL ANN TOMLINSON

This column will present issues especially pertinent to teachers of gifted students. Each issue will include a common challenge or vexing problem and provide teachers with suggestions to ease or improve the situation.

At its core, of course, high achievement has a lot going for it. It suggests a child learning to accept responsibility, a young person developing his or her capacity as a learner, a student who takes pride in good work. These are clearly positive traits, and most teachers and parents would be delighted if all students invested in doing well in school.

A focus on achievement has its liabilities too, however, especially when good grades become the focus of achievement. Particularly at risk of the pitfalls are parents of highly able students (and their children). Because good grades take center stage in our way of doing school and in our society, it's a good idea to take a look from time to time at some of the snares of over-accentuating grades, as well as at some approaches to helping parents of advanced learners develop a balanced perspective on school achievement.

Before that discussion, it's important to note that parents of highly able kids vary widely in their perspectives on school—just as their children do. It's inappropriate, therefore, to assume they all have the same take on their children's achievement. I've worked with parents of bright kids whose school focus seems to be ensuring that it doesn't interfere with enjoying family activities. I've worked with some who see school as a necessary encumbrance, but who focus on "really" educating their kids through a variety of home-based and school-based learning options. I've worked with some for whom a C in a course is just fine, thank you. Sadly, I've worked with some whose own lives are so full for one reason or another that they pay little attention to their children's schooling.

That said, like many other teachers, I've also worked with many parents of bright kids who are at least single minded about their students' achievement. At worst, they have a take-no-prisoners approach that makes it clear that, "This is an A student, and anything less is a reflection on the teacher." For those parents, and the young people in their homes, teachers sometimes need to be ready to diplomatically point out that the quest for good grades can run amok.

When Achievement Matters Too Much

The purpose of this article is not to reject the value of achievement—or achievement as a value. Doing well on important things is likely desirable for both the achiever and society. However, because very bright kids can achieve at high levels, that achievement can come to occupy too great a place in life. Here are some of the ways in which that can be a problem:

1. Children can begin to believe people only really like them because of their grades. When students' self-worth becomes synonymous with their GPA, class rank, or honor roll status, their personhood is diminished. Kids need unambiguous assurance that people love them because of who they are—not because of grades or status they bring home.
2. When grades begin to matter too much, even a hint of failure becomes unacceptable. For some students, a B is a disaster. Not knowing an answer in class is a humiliation. Not only is that a huge pressure for a young person, but when a child learns to avoid "failure" at all costs, he or she has closed a door on important personal growth. Unwillingness to be wrong is a hallmark of a closed mind.
3. When success matters too much, students lose out on real learning. Psychologists talk about two orientations to learning. One focuses on knowing and understanding; the other on performing. Students with a performance orientation are centered on "getting it right" and getting good grades. They don't seek rich and challenging learning experiences, but rather predictable ones. They learn to be safe students. They'd rather have a teacher give them a blueprint for an A than to think their way through knotty problems with ambiguous solutions. Trouble is, the latter orientation is a less robust preparation for life than the former. In the real world, people who develop and use their talents fully seek opportunities that stretch them. They are willing to risk "failure" because they understand they learn most in settings which challenge them, and in which errors are often a product of that challenge.
4. Too much emphasis on achievement can lead to perfectionism. There's a line of demarcation between the student who enjoys doing well and the student who's obsessed with it. A student with a comfortable approach to the pursuit of quality in school can say, "I blew it in school today, but generally I don't. Let me have another whack at this, and I'll probably do better next time. On balance, I'm a good student." A perfectionist is haunted by the specter of lost points on a test, lost status as a performer. Not only does this student ache when there's an academic glitch, but also fears there might be one even when there's not. Perfectionism can lead to all sorts of uncomfortable and potentially serious problems over time.
5. Students who value the trappings of achievement too much often lose tolerance for people who do less well than they do. Good grades not only become too important in the students' own self-estimation, but also in their estimation of the worth of others. Not surprisingly, this perspective makes them prickly to be around.
6. Some bright students suffer from a different sort of problem related to too much success in schools. These young people make very good grades with very little effort. Because they know they didn't really have to work hard to get the grades, they feel they didn't earn the grades. It's easy for these students to get a sense that

they've somehow "fooled" adults, but they also struggle with the fear that if someone gave them challenging tasks, they'd be unable to succeed. This "impostor syndrome" causes a sense of long-term guilt and insecurity for many highly able young people when success comes easily time and time again.

Suggestions to Share with Parents

Sometimes, students themselves seem in relentless pursuit of high grades. Sometimes, very well-meaning parents contribute to grade mania. In either case, parents are the adults in the family and can play a key role in helping their children see achievement in a balanced way. Here are a few suggestions teachers might share with parents at the right time and in the right way. Of course, it's also important that teachers subscribe to these suggestions as well. They are the other key adults in most young people's lives.

Some of the suggestions here are important for some bright youngsters at some junctures in their lives. None of the suggestions is applicable to all highly able kids. Not all very bright children suffer from an overemphasis on achievement—and even when they do, their experiences and needs vary.

1. Take the long look—be clear on the kind of person you want your child to become. Then work in that direction. If we want kids to grow up to be hungry learners, intellectually curious, joyful about learning, creative, and empathetic, that requires a different set of experiences than the "grades first and foremost" approach.
2. Continually let your child hear the many things you value in him or her—a sense of humor, truthfulness, courage, politeness, willingness to help others, a goofy smile. Be sure grades don't become more important than the really important things.
3. Be sure your kids know you make mistakes. Be honest—even overt—about times you fall short of goals. Let your kids hear how you make decisions on where you'll invest your time and effort and how you cope with the imperfections those sorts of choices inevitably cause.
4. Let your child know that creativity, effort, and persistence are more reliable predictors of adult success than are straight A's. Research and the experience of those who make an indelibly positive mark on our world will back you up.
5. Actively support your student in pursuing challenging learning opportunities rather than only safe ones. Let them know you're far happier for them when you see them struggle with an idea or grapple for an insight than when you see them reel in a formulaic A. Be sure they see you seek and enjoy challenges as well.
6. Help your child compete against him or herself more than against others. To set, work for, and achieve personally challenging and satisfying goals ought to be far more cause for celebration than making an A against standards set for someone with less ability, opportunity, or support.

ILLUSTRATION BY JON PEARSON

7. When your child finds herself in a challenging learning situation, help her persevere. Don't panic. This is a rare chance for a really bright kid to gain some coping skills. It's better for the student to hit an intellectual wall when you and a teacher can help her learn to scale it, than for the same thing to happen for the first time when she's a college freshman and 1,000 miles from home. The message needs to be, "Hang in there. Figure out how to get better at this stuff. That will serve you better than bailing out. I'm here to give encouragement."
8. If it doesn't happen on its own, help your child find some situations in which at least some degree of failure is a natural consequence of engaging in the activity. That's surprisingly hard to come by for some very able kids. These kids can get hooked on perfection because it continues to seem within their reach. Learning to live at peace with imperfection is liberating for perfectionists. It also teaches patience with the imperfections in all people.

Examples from the Real World

Parents who understand that learning is not a synonym for high grades, and that who we are is bigger than what we do, practice strategies like these on a daily basis. They help their bright young people develop a balanced perspective on achievement.

Eighth-grader Lindsey elected to take a very rigorous history class in which A's were a rarity. Most of her friends opted for an easier history option in which A's were readily available. Asked why she made the choice, she said, "My mom has always said school is about learning more than it's about grades. I'm going where I know I'll be using my time to learn something. The rest will take care of itself."

Ben's dad was proud of his son's writing talent and worried because school expectations failed to stretch that talent. At his suggestion, he and Ben read biographies of writers to see what they could learn about the writing life. "These people write," his dad reflected to him, "to find their own meaning, to refine their own ear. They keep at it because it satisfies them. I don't think we read about a single writer who said, 'I'm good enough.'" "What he taught me," Ben said, "is to write from inside myself, for myself. Grades aren't much help."

Cathy called her mom from college on Sunday evening. She'd missed a class on Friday to be part of a weekend-long Habitat for Humanity project. The professor had approved her absence and said she could make up anything she missed on Monday. Sunday night, however, Cathy learned the professor had assigned a major paper on Friday. It was due Monday. No exceptions. She was near tears when she told her mom there was no way she could produce a good paper overnight. When Cathy finally stopped talking, her mom paused, and then said quietly, "Your self-worth has never hinged on a grade, and it never will."

Lucky kids, I think. All of them, by the way, make good grades in school. Each of them, however, understands achievement to be something far richer, more complex, and more balanced than what's in a gradebook or on a report card. Their parents have seen to that. Teachers can help these and other parents by making them aware of the varied issues and solutions related to achievement, grades, and success in learning.

CAROL ANN TOMLINSON, Ph.D., is Associate Professor at the University of Virginia and president-elect of the National Association for Gifted Children.

"Reshape One's Foot to Try to Fit Into a New Shoe"

The Multiple Uses of Task Cards

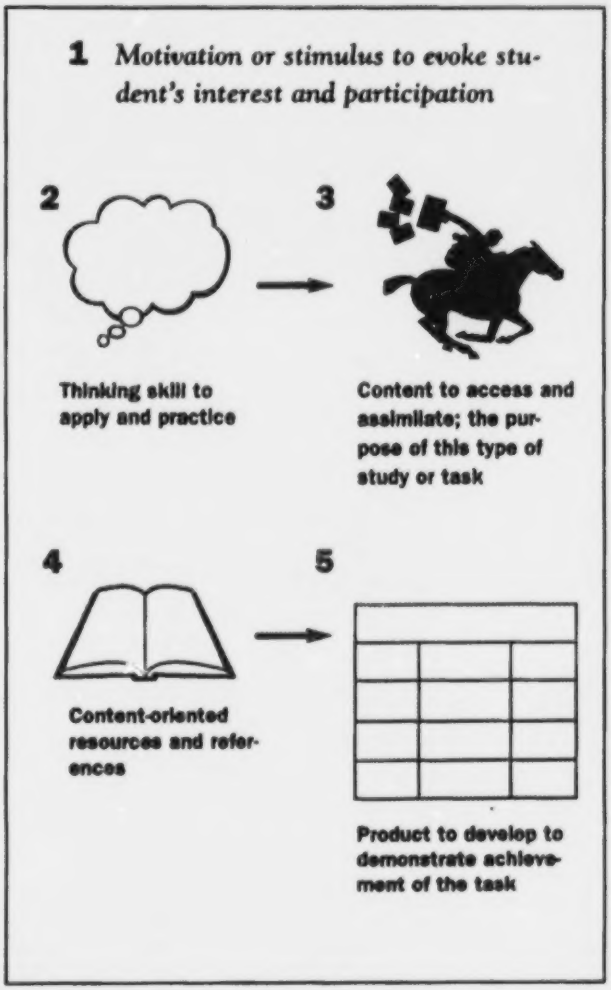
By SANDRA N. KAPLAN

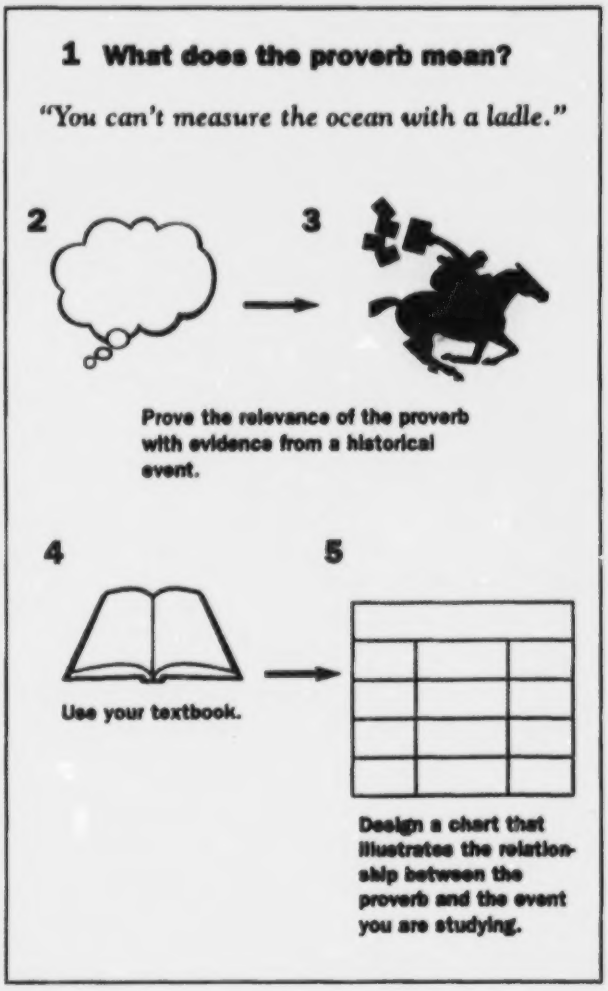
Task cards are developed by teachers to present to students information related to learning experiences or opportunities. They communicate what students are expected to do and how they should proceed. A task card defines a learning experience, delineating for students both the parameters within which to perform the task and the anticipated outcome. It may also offer content or suggestions about where to get information.

Task cards offer teachers a way to provide a wide variety of student-centered curricular opportunities to gifted students, making them especially functional in heterogeneous classroom settings. In most classrooms, task cards are used to enhance the existing standards-driven curriculum as well as introduce new curriculum. Task cards offer learning objectives or assignments which support student abilities to develop and practice independent learning skills and habits.

Task Card Design

The design and format of task cards are fundamental to their viability and practicality. An effort to use certain elements in a regular and predictable way will contribute to student success with the learning tasks. If each card within a set of task cards follows the same design, students need to use less effort to decipher the requirements of each task and can maximize their success in working on an independent basis.


1 Motivation or stimulus to evoke student's interest and participation
2
3
Thinking skill to apply and practice
Content to access and assimilate; the purpose of this type of study or task
4
5
Content-oriented resources and references
Product to develop to demonstrate achievement of the task


1 What does the proverb mean?
"You can't measure the ocean with a ladle."
2
3
Prove the relevance of the proverb with evidence from a historical event.
4
5
Use your textbook.
Design a chart that illustrates the relationship between the proverb and the event you are studying.

The set of task cards on pages 46 and 47 uses Chinese proverbs as a bridge or motivation to developing critical thinking in interdisciplinary studies. The interdisciplinary studies of the tasks are standards-driven. The skill area is interpreting meaning of figurative language; the content will come from various disciplines. Two optional uses of the task cards follow.

Using Task Cards as Part of a Learning Center

A learning center is a designated area in the classroom that provides a comprehensive set of learning experiences related to a theme (in this case figurative language) and communicated through a set of task cards. The learning center can augment or enrich an existing teacher-directed curriuclum or it can be use to introduce a curricular experience of an area of study that presents a new or nontraditional learning opportunity reflective of the needs and interests of gifted students. Students can:

1. Be assigned a time to work at the center
2. Self-select a period to work at the center
3. Use the center on a rotational basis.

Using Task Cards as Part of a Teacher-Directed Lesson

The task cards can be used as components of comprehensive lesson plans.

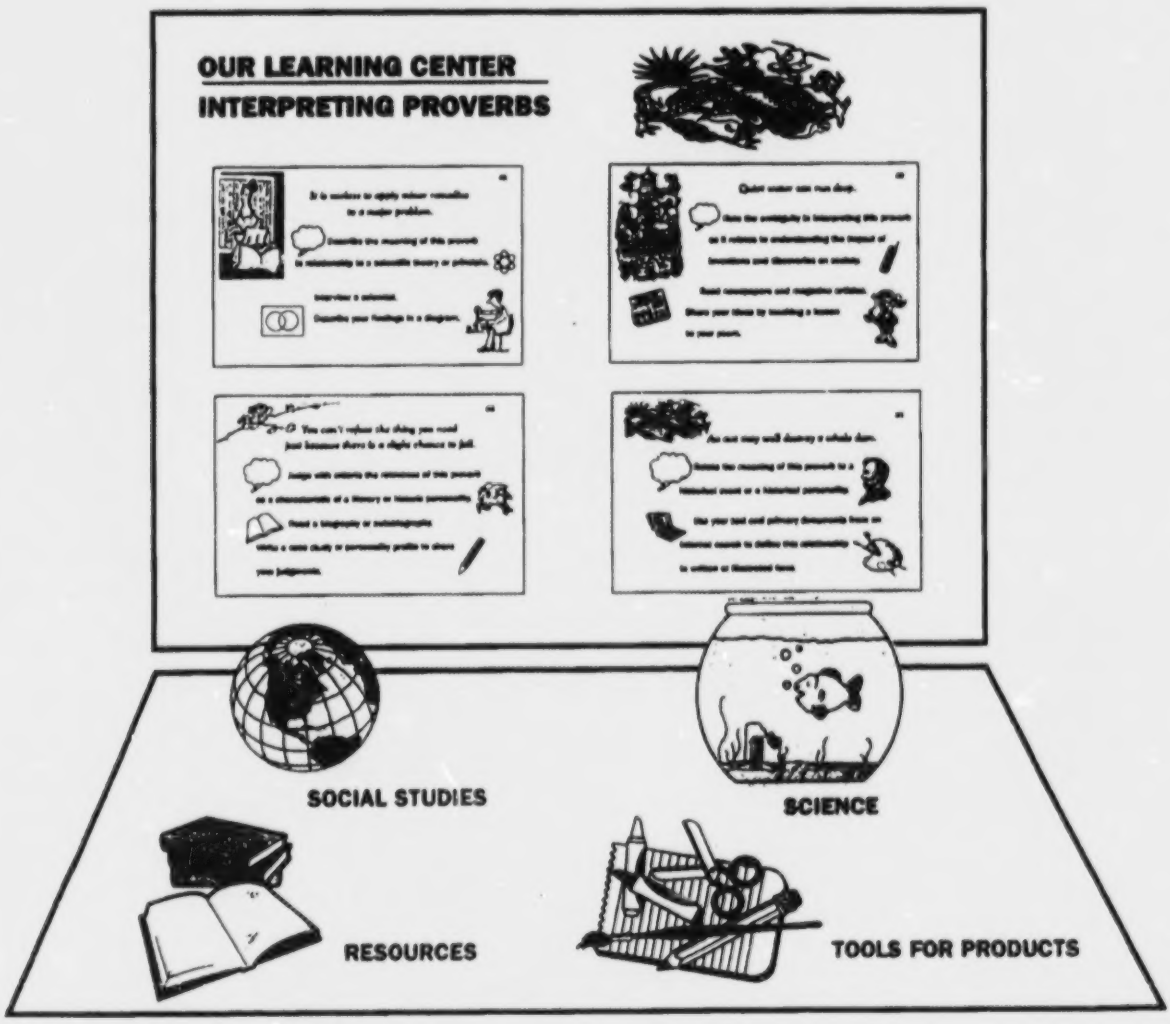
Motivation: To stimulate curiosity and interest and lead toward the input of the lesson.

Input: To provide reference or background information for the lesson.

Output: To illustrate how to synthesize and present information.

Culmination: To promote discussion and debate to provide closure to the lesson or to motivate future or continued study.

Assessment: To form a basis for an evaluative conference with individuals or groups about what and how learning has taken place.



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Lesson Plan - Strategy: Instructional Deductive Reasoning

Standard: (Complete with appropriate state standard.)

Objective: Students will be able to define and exemplify figurative speech patterns in the form of Chinese proverbs and relate these to areas of study in literature, science, and social studies. They will demonstrate understasnding in written or graphic products.

Model of Teaching

Motivation	• Introduce the following symbols to students asking them to describe what they mean in the various contexts in which they are used. • Explain to students that they will be studying the meaning of what is said by others.
Present the Purpose of the Lesson	• Discuss the meaning of the skill infer and interpret as it relates to ideas, such as the headlines on the front page of a newspaper. • Define the causes and effects of many and varied interpretations and inferences aligned to the same headline or communication. • Introduce or review the concept of a proverb and the reasons why proverbs evoke many and varied interpretations.
Introduce the Ideas To Be Decoded	• Present one of the task cards to the students. Read and discuss the selected task helping students to identify and label the components of the card: proverb, thinking skill, content area, resources, and product.
Solicit Assumption	• Read the proverb on the task card and ask students to state their assumptions regarding its meaning. Write these assumptions on a chart to be kept and used as a reference at the end of the lesson.

OUR ASSUMPTIONS

Proverb: _____

Name	Interpretation

<table>
<tr><td>Introduce the Task and Research</td><td>• Inform students how they will collect information (in written or graphic formats) to define, prove, or exemplify the proverb. Note the research materials to be used to find the needed evidence. Note that all students could research a single topical area in a discipline to decipher the proverb or they can be divided into groups with each group investigating a different area of study in different disciplines.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Share and Summarize</td><td>• Ask students (or groups) to share the information they found that helps to define, prove, or exemplify the proverb. Use one of these retrieval charts to record the students' responses.

Proverb: "_____"
Evidence to Support | Negate

Proverb: "_____"
Evidence From:
Social Studies | Science | Literature

• Use the data on the charts to summarize the evidence.
• Discuss the degree to which the information from the references evidences, clarifies, and supports the mearning of the proverb.
• Discuss the meaning of ambiguity and its role in interpretations and historical and literary analyses.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Verify Stated Assumptions</td><td>• Revisit the original assumptions stated by the students. Discuss why original assumptions may or may not be consistent with evidence gleaned from research.</td></tr>
</table>

#1

It is useless to apply minor remedies to a major problem.

Describe the meaning of this proverb in relationship to a scientific theory or principle.

Interview a scientist.

Describe your findings in a diagram.

#2

Quiet water can run deep.

Note the ambiguity in interpreting this proverb as it relates to understanding the impact of inventions and discoveries on society.

Read newspapers and magazine articles.

Share your ideas by teaching a lesson to your peers.

#3

You can't refuse the thing you need just because there is a slight chance to fail.

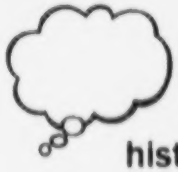
Judge with criteria the relevance of this proverb as a characteristic of a literary or historic personality.

Read a biography or autobiography.

Write a case study or personality profile to share your judgments.

#4

An ant may well destroy a whole dam.



Relate the meaning of this proverb to a historical event or a historical personality.

Use your text and primary documents from an Internet search to define this relationship in written or illustrated form.

Starting Points

BY CAROLYN KOTTMEYER

Welcome to "Web Watch," a regular feature of the new *Gifted Education Communicator*. This column will provide links to the best that is available on the Internet relating to parenting and educating gifted children. The column will be presented in two parts: one for parents and educators, and one for kids.

Let's get started by dispelling some of the myths of gifted education, with the help of the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented (NRC/GT). One of my favorite articles to share with people new to gifted education as well as those familiar with it is "Distinguishing Myths From Realities: NRC/GT Research" by Marcia Gentry and Karen Kettle, http://www.sp.uconn.edu/~nrcgt/news/winter98/wintr983.html. Here you'll find a brief quiz and the research references to back up the myths and realities they've found in gifted education. Some are intuitive (we all know them), but some are more interesting and worth your time and attention. Try the quiz yourself!

For the Adults: Grouping

Now that we've dispelled some myths, let's take a look at ability grouping resources to follow up the feature article by Karen Rogers. Ability grouping—not to be confused with tracking—allows like-ability children to be grouped together for a specific subject or for a certain period of time. These groups can be formed and reformed in different subjects, as the children's strengths and interests vary. Much of the research available on ability grouping on the Internet is published by the NRC/GT. Here you can find articles including "Cluster Grouping Coast to Coast" by Patricia A. Schuler and "Within-Class Cluster Grouping and Related Strategies: Brief Summaries" prepared by Joseph Renzulli and Harry Milne. There are abstracts of the most popular research studies on grouping, "The Relationship of Grouping Practices to the Education of the Gifted and Talented Learner" by Karen B. Rogers and "An Analysis of the Research on Ability Grouping: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives" by James A. Kulik, and information on how to order the full studies. You'll find more print resources in "Grouping: A Short, Data Based Primary Journal Research Sources Bibliography" by Joseph S. Renzulli.

Other articles on grouping include, from the University of Oregon, "How Should We Group to Achieve Excellence with Equity?" by Bonnie Grossen, a Fordham Report "The Tracking and Ability Grouping Debate" by Tom Loveless, and in *Education Week* "Debate Over Ability Grouping Gains High Profile" by Peter Schmidt. Each of these articles details the differences between tracking and grouping, and the first two articles go into great detail of the nuts and bolts of grouping and its benefits to all students.

And to make your life easier (and typing URLs less of a nuisance), links for all these articles, and more, are available on www.hoagiesgifted.org/grouping.htm.

For the Kids: Reading Lists

Each issue of Web Watch will have something for the gifted children in our lives. This issue features reading lists that really hit the spot with gifted kids with all varieties of interests. First, a varied list that offers tons of reading for children who are reading books many years above their age level: GT-World's Book List www.gtworld.org/gtbook.htm. This is a great list to check when your student or child liked a particular book, and you're looking for more books at a similar level.

Next check out the American Library Association book lists: www.ala.org/parents. These lists include Caldecott Medal books, Newbery Medal books, plus more great lists, including the Coretta Scott King books about the black experience and Pura Belpré books about the Latino experience.

And if you're feeling like a bit of a renegade, check out their 100 Most Frequently Challenged Books of the last decade: www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/top100bannedbooks.html. This list includes classics *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck, *Forever* by Judy Blume, *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger, and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, both by Mark Twain.

If you like Stephanie Tolan's fiction, visit her new site and reading list: www.stephanietolan.com/novels.htm. Tolan writes novels for young people that feature gifted children as primary characters. *Welcome to the Ark*, and many other great fiction books for young adults are included, along with books for the middle and young readers. I must admit, I love Stephanie's books, too!

For more book lists, including Biographies for Gifted Students, Books for Children Featuring Gifted Children, and Smithsonian Magazine Notable Books for Children, visit www.hoagieskids.org/kidrdlst.htm.

Happy reading!

CAROLYN KOTTMEYER is the webmistress of Hoagies' Gifted Education Page www.hoagiesgifted.org and Hoagies' Kids and Teens Page www.hoagieskids.org.

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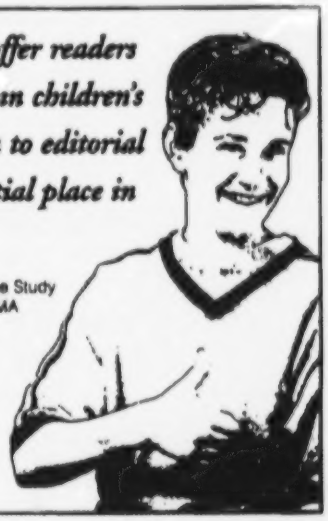

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Finding Inspiration

BY PATRICIA ROBERTSON

How many times have you worked with your students to develop an outline, plan a project, compare two sets of data, outline the plot of a novel, or brainstorm solutions to a problem? If you ended up with pages of chart paper hung all over the room or with a whiteboard full of scribbles, you will appreciate Inspiration from Inspiration Software, Inc.

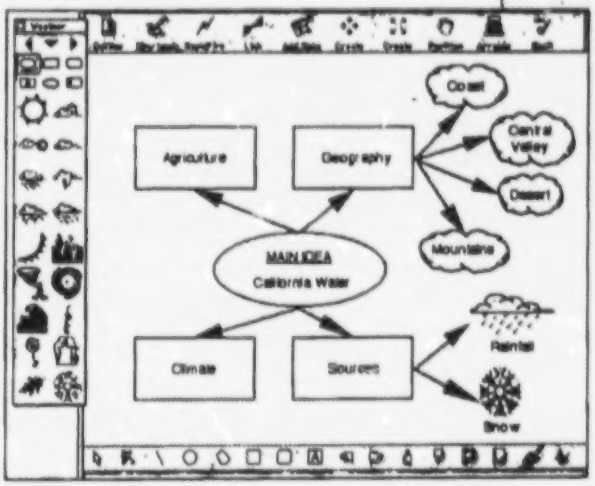
Inspiration is a visual learning tool that provides a way for students, teachers, and even parents to get those elusive ideas down on paper in a way that can be saved, reorganized, and printed.

Ideas are entered in outline form or more commonly as graphic and text symbols that are connected to one another. A "Rapid Fire" feature allows thoughts to be entered as fast as the user can type. The program provides a complete set of organizational and formatting options. Inspiration 6 includes more than 1250 symbols. Included are standards such as flowchart symbols and geometrical shapes as well as symbols representing animals, states, food, computers, and planets. Users can paste or import additional graphics from other sources and create their own custom symbol libraries.

Let's imagine a scenario that will help explain how Inspiration works. A group of students needs to develop a project about the impact of water on the development of California.

In the illustration, the main idea, California Water, appears in the center of an Inspiration worksheet. Press a function key to start "Rapid Fire" and begin typing all the ideas that come to mind: Sources, Climate, Agriculture, Geography. Add ideas to each subtopic. Continue to build the presentation by adding ideas and rearranging ideas among levels (as easy as dragging a portion of the diagram around or relinking to another topic). URL hyperlinks can be added to the Inspiration document so teachers and students can provide links to related websites. "Spell Check" helps eliminate typos and spelling errors.

Users can move between the Diagram and Outline views with a mouse click. Changes made in one environment are automatically updated in the other. In Outline view, the document can be exported and opened in a presentation program such as Microsoft PowerPoint. In Diagram view, the document can be exported as a graphic to be used in a word processing or presentation program.



How does Inspiration fit into the instructional program? The program is particularly useful for learners who are nonlinear thinkers or who prefer to see ideas presented in a graphical format. It is a great tool for developing a whole-class project. This works especially well if the classroom is equipped with a large screen projection device. A teacher can also develop a blank template that can be used as a handout for students working in small groups. For example, students can explore the interaction of characters in a novel in an interesting and dynamic way. Small-group work can be recorded and shared with the entire class. Planning for a field trip or activity can include a "Checklist" feature that places a check box in each component to help track progress. Additional sample activities are included with the application.

Users who are just getting started will find the template collection very helpful. There are 35 templates for such topics as Goal Setting, Historic Period, Poetic Analysis, Vocabulary, and Venn Diagram. Each template included in the program opens with a description of how to use that template. The directions and examples can be removed and the template can be modified before saving the document. With Inspiration users may develop documents that they wish to use again. These documents can also be saved as templates and will appear in the Templates folder.

There is a clearly written manual that includes a step-by-step tutorial and a description of how to use templates included with the program. Additional support is available from the program's Help menu and from the website. The website is also filled with useful ideas about how to use the program in a variety of subject areas. Although it's easy to start using the program as soon as it's installed, there are many advanced features that the user will want to explore over time. These include several options for organizing the diagram, formatting, linking to additional Inspiration documents, and printing.

The program runs on both Windows and Macintosh platforms. The current version requires a Macintosh or Power Macintosh running System 7.0 or higher or a Windows machine with a 486 processor or higher, Windows 95, 98 2000 or NT 4.0. A CD ROM drive and 20–30 MB of hard disk space for a full installation are also required. A 30-day trial version can be downloaded from the Inspiration Software website.

Inspiration 6
Inspiration Software, Inc.
www.inspiration.com
Phone 503-297-4676
Fax 503-297-4676

PATRICIA ROBERTSON is an educator with experience as a classroom teacher, library media specialist, technology coordinator, and administrator. Ms. Robertson has been involved with technology in education for nearly 20 years. She can be reached at: probert@tells.org.

Themes Encourage Book Discussions

BY JODY FICKES SHAPIRO

During the last several years I have had the pleasure of writing occasionally for the CAG *Communicator*; now I am equally pleased to become a regular contributor to the new *Gifted Education Communicator*. Mostly I have been a matchmaker. I want you to get together with my favorite books to meet their characters and enrich your lives in the process. Well-written children's books are as pleasurable for grown-ups as for the audience for which they were originally intended. And if you read the same good books as your children and students, you have an immediate connection, a common meeting ground, a basis for serious nonthreatening discussion, and an opportunity to remain in touch with our children's interior lives at the crossroads of their moral and intellectual development.

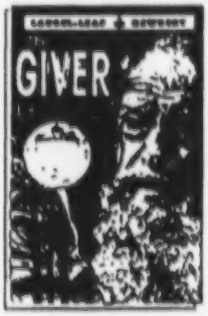
Eight years ago our bookstore began a special summer program to encourage book discussions between parents and middle school students. And because of repeated requests by parents of younger children, we added a session for elementary-age students and their parents. We wanted to offer a structured venue for meaningful conversation between children and adults. Our intention was to model an interaction that can be used in a home or school setting as well. I'd like to share this model with you.

The idea is fairly simple. We pick three books that have a related theme. We try to find books in which the authors provide no slick solutions or easy answers. It is hoped that the adults as well as children find the ideas a basis for good discussion. Families who sign up for the program purchase the titles, receive a set of prepared questions, and agree to read the books and consider the questions ahead of each meeting.

We begin the first session with ground rules that promote courteous conversation in which each participant has equal standing. After discussing the set of prepared questions, the group is asked if anyone has any other thoughts or responses they wish to add. By then, even the quietest of participants tends to be comfortable enough to offer any brilliant insights they have not had the opportunity to express. The "last chance" option sometimes evolves into the liveliest part of the session.

Theme: Against The Tide

What about the books we have read? The most successful, generating the most enthusiasm, was *The Giver* by Lois Lowry. We read *The Giver* as part of the theme, "Against the Tide," along with *Kneeknock Rise* by Natalie Babbit and *Shiloh* by Phyllis Naylor. In all three titles, the protagonist must make decisions that fly in the face of prevailing community rules.



The Giver, which received the coveted Newbery Medal in 1994, is one of the most provocative and thoughtful novels ever published for middle school readers. Set in a future society where life seems to have become beautifully organized and simplified, 12-year-old Jonas is chosen to become the next "Receiver of Memory," the community's most honored life assignment. As his training advances, he begins to recognize the price that must be paid to maintain a "perfect society." For many young readers, the questions that arise in reading the novel may be startlingly new, and Lowry's ambiguous ending offers great fodder for thoughtful discussion.

Lowry's fans will be happy to know that *Gathering Blue*, published this past fall, is a companion piece to *The Giver*. Also set in a future time, it presents an entirely different society. This one is brutish and primitive. Kira, mourning the death of her mother, is placed under the protection of the Guardians because of her gifts as a needle worker. She, like *The Giver*'s Jonas, will be used to help preserve the people's history of themselves. And like Jonas, she uncovers some serious discrepancies between what appears to be and what really is the truth about the world in which she lives.

"We try to find books in which the authors provide no slick solutions or easy answers."

The other two titles also generated interesting discussion. Certainly the children understood Marty's dilemma in *Shiloh* when he is forced to return a stray dog to its abusive owner. When a second opportunity to rescue Shiloh presents itself, Marty takes another course that mires him in serious deception. The question of what might have been Marty's correct course of action was hotly debated by the children and their parents. They wondered what they would have done in a similar situation and talked about alternatives.

Natalie Babbitt may have had Ibsen's *The Enemy of the People*, in mind when she wrote *Kneeknock Rise*. Like the doctor in Ibsen's play, young Egan finds himself unable to communicate the truth about a natural phenomenon that serves as the town's economic base. In the case of *Kneeknock Rise*, the community has evolved an entire mythology about the monstrous Megrimum who is said to dwell at the top of the rise. When Egan sets out to find the monster, he discovers more than he expected. One of the most provocative lines of the book in speaking about belief says, "If your mind is made up, all the facts in the world won't make the slightest difference."

Other Themes

Among the other themes we have explored with middle school students were "Kids You Might Otherwise Never Meet," "Inside My Shoes," and "Odd Ones Out."

In the three books selected to examine the

theme, "Kids You Might Otherwise Never Meet," the issue of racial prejudice was a common thread. All three authors explored serious issues with marvelous wit and humor, creating characters the readers would want to have as real-life friends. *Maniac Magee*, author Jerry Spinelli's "bigger than life"

character, walked a line down the middle of a town divided by racial tension. Maniac seemed impervious to the potentially dangerous situation in which he was placing himself. Carol Fenner's heroine in *Yolanda's Genius* also faced down a gang of tough kids that threatened not only her own brother, but other children on the school playground. We chose this book in part because we felt that our primarily white readership needed to meet Yolanda and her family in order to gain some perspective on what life is like for an African American living in the greater suburban Chicago area. For its insightful exploration of giftedness, *Yolanda's Genius*, should be on every GATE reading list.

And if you've never met *The Great Gilly Hopkins*, then you have one more of life's treats in store. Katherine Paterson's Newbery Honor winner, written in 1978, remains a perennial favorite. Gilly is a foster child in a last-chance placement with warm-hearted Maime Trotter. She's an angry and unhappy child, fantasizing about reconnecting with her irresponsible mother and burdened with a large dose of antipathy toward African Americans. She too is bright, resilient, and unforgettable as is the gifted storytelling of the inventive Paterson.

After Littleton, Colorado—Summer 1999

We had no idea how timely our theme, "Odd Ones Out," would be in the summer of 1999, following the tragic events in Littleton, Colorado. The books selected dealt with kids who were constrained from communicating fully with their parents. In each case the lack of candor with parents caused the protagonist to behave independent of parental protection or support.

In *Wringer* by Jerry Spinelli, Palmer must keep from his friends and his parents his own disgust of the town's annual Pigeon Shoot. What makes it even more difficult is that his tenth birthday is fast approaching when he will be expected to fully participate as a Wringer. Ten is the magic age in which all the boys in town "get" to help at the event by wringing the necks of the wounded pigeons. And to make matters even more painful for Palmer, he has been hiding a pet pigeon in his bedroom from his parents and friends. One interesting question that arises from the story is why Palmer feels he cannot unburden himself to his own parents.

Avi's *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* is set in the mid-nineteenth century on a transatlantic voyage where a young woman finds herself in the most improbable situation of being the only passenger and only female aboard a ship fraught with mystery and subterfuge. The book is written as a diary of her dangerous adventure. While the book is a compelling read, its ending is even more

surprising. Avi's award-winning novel is one of those rare books that, in spite of its female protagonist, finds a receptive audience with boys as well.

The third novel we considered in the summer of 1999 has an even more improbable setting, Zimbabwe, 2194. Tendai and his two siblings escape their technologically controlled environment and the protection of their parents so that he can earn a scouting badge. Almost immediately they are kidnapped and forced to work as slaves in a plastics mine. Meanwhile their parents launch a citywide search, hiring three mutant detectives, *The Ear, the Eye and the Arm*, to rescue them. Nancy Farmer has written a science fiction masterpiece that stands uniquely alone in the body of children's literature for its humor, adventure, and imagination.

Talking about the "Odd Ones Out" in the three novels led to more personal discussions of kids' experiences as outsiders at different times in their lives. For the adult participants it was an opportunity to consider the difficulties children face in their transition from their protected lives into the harsher world of adolescence.

Parents need not abdicate involvement with their children at this critical juncture, but must find constructive ways to maintain open communication. Book discussion groups can be a means of opening nonthreatening communication, of sharing ideas, and of being part of a socializing experience.

For Information

For a more detailed description and support statement of family reading groups, contact the editor at: gosfield@home.com or send a stamped self-addressed envelope to Adventures for Kids, 3457 Telegraph Road, Ventura, CA 93003 and request Parent Child Book Discussion Groups Information Sheets.

JODY FICKES SHAPIRO is a children's literature consultant and owner of Adventures for Kids children's bookstore in Ventura, CA.

BOOKS WITH THEMES

The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle
Avi, 1990, Orchard
hc 0-531-05393-X, pb 0-380-71475-2

Kneeknock Rise
Natalie Babbitt, 1994, Farrar
pb 0-374+44260-6

The Ear, the Eye, and the Arm
Nancy Farmer, 1994, Orchard
hc 0-531-06829-3, pb 0-14-037641-0

Yolanda's Genius
Carol Fenner, 1995, Atheneum
hc 0-689-80001-0, pb 0-689-81327-9

Gathering Blue
Lois Lowry, 2000, Houghton
hc 0-618-05681-9

The Giver
Lois Lowry, 1993, Houghton
hc 0-395-64566-2, pb0-440-219078

Shiloh
Phyllis Naylor, 1991, Atheneum
hc 0-689-31614-3, pb0-689-83582-5

The Great Gilly Hopkins
Katherine Paterson, 1978, Harper
hc 0-690-03837-2, pb 0-06-440201-0

Maniac Magee
Jerry Spinelli, 1990, Little Brown
hc 0-316-80722-2, pb 0-316-80906-3

Wringer
Jerry Spinelli, 1997, Harper
hc 0-06-024913-7, pb 0-06-4440578-8

Once Upon A Mind: The Stories and Scholars of Gifted Child Education

By James R. Delisle

(2000) Wadsworth Publishers (Thompson Learning Systems)
paperback, $38.95, 299 pp.
ISBN: 0-15-503192-9

REVIEWED BY HILARY COHEN

Yes, it's a textbook, and that makes it pricey. But don't let that put you off. After stating that, "Generally, there is nothing quite as dry as...a textbook," Jim Delisle explains why *Once Upon A Mind* is not. In writing it, he asked himself,

> What if a textbook was written that appealed to the senses as well as the mind? What if the facts and figures were accompanied by stories and images of the people who derived these facts and figures? What if a textbook were...personal?

And this one is. Through narratives, excerpts, and illuminating sidebars, the author accompanies the reader through a history of the people and ideas important to gifted child education. Beginning with the first recorded instance of standardized testing more than 2000 years ago in China, he leads us briskly through the ages. We meet Comenius, the seventeenth-century author of "arguably the first gifted child education text ever written," and learn how Francis Galton contributed to Alfred Binet's thoughts on measuring the intellect. Then, Delisle asks us to consider how later theorists, practitioners, researchers, and parents have built on the foundations established by Terman, Hollingworth, and Torrance.

In seven compact chapters, the book ranges from a history of gifted child education, through identification, creativity, curriculum and program planning, instructional styles and strategies, and social and emotional needs. It explores practices including the fashionable "best practices" and those with staying power. Further topics of interest such as perfectionism, depression, underachievement, ADD/ADHD, and others are surveyed in chapter eight. Each chapter ends with a short list of guiding questions for the reader using it as a text and a targeted list of key resources. A detailed bibliography and index are also provided.

Delisle's delight in his subject and respect for his readers are manifest throughout. We meet his mentors and his colleagues, who are invited to share their views. We learn from Linda Silverman of a visit by Eleanor Roosevelt to the Roeper City and Country School and how that meeting affected the development of *Sesame Street*. We hear from Paul Plowman about the origins of the Marland Report. And Alexinia Baldwin relates her views on identifying and serving gifted children from minority groups.

The special concerns of gifted girls and women, of gifted members of minority communities, and of the twice-exceptional are considered throughout. And, unlike many other works about gifted children, this one acknowledges openly the different levels of giftedness and the importance of addressing the distinctive needs of children at these different levels.

Most important, while providing a solid grounding in the background and development of gifted child education in the United States, Delisle also reminds us to use what we know. He gives the reader insight into how things got the way they are and permission to question some of the accepted heroes and received wisdom.

This book is a valuable contribution to the short shelf of must-have reading on gifted child education. Whether you are a professional or parent, you will learn much from this book and have a good time along the way.

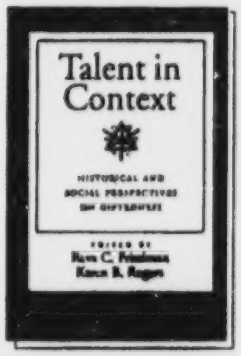
HILARY COHEN and her husband homeschool their profoundly gifted daughter in Los Angeles County, California.

Talent in Context: Historical and Social Perspectives of Giftedness

By Reva C. Friedman and Karen B. Rogers

(1998) American Psychological Association
www.apa.org
hardcover, $34.95, 218 pp.
ISBN: 155798493x

REVIEWED BY JEAN DRUM



"My one-year-old is a genius at keeping us up at night!" "Albert Einstein is the greatest genius of our time." "She's a genius at baking yummy lemon pies." "Leonardo da Vinci was a genius at both painting and sculpture." Genius has become almost an all-purpose word, and the authors of this book recognize this fact when they write, "Over the past 4,000 years, there have been seismic shifts in the ways this phenomenon has been recognized, operationalized, and investigated: from divinely inspired to continuous with ordinary behavior; from an expression of profound neurosis to the sine qua non of supranormal functioning; from mysterious and inexplicable to highly accessible, understandable, quantifiable, and replicable."

In this volume, 16 scholars in the field of gifted studies explore some of the aspects of the phenomenon known as genius and offer insights on how it is viewed from the perspective of today's culturally derived values and political forces. There are three main sections: Cultural Contexts, Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Contexts, Conceptualizing and Reconceptualizing Giftedness.

The authors further identify five major themes.

- There is a dynamic interplay of social and

historical forces on conceptualizing and nurturing talent.

- Talent must be examined in an interdisciplinary way, using the best ideas of biology, anthropology, sociology, history, and psychology.
- The expression of talent must be viewed ecologically in a variety of contexts and systems.
- The influence of others on the expression of talent cannot be overrated; high-level production does not take place in isolation.
- Expertise (outstanding performance in a particular field) adds to but does not replace more traditional conceptions of giftedness and talent.

This work is an ambitious project, and the chapters range far and wide in examining giftedness, talent, expertise, production, and performance against the background of the present day and a society which is, above all else, diverse. It makes for interesting and challenging reading.

In the first section, the traditionally viewed competing values of equity and excellence are discussed in the area of talent development. Gifted women have a chapter, but sadly we learn what is already well known by anyone who has spent time in the field of giftedness: even at the dawn of the 21st century, smart girls become gifted women who must spend time and energy in a balancing act between longing to let their cognitive ability race ahead at will and needing to rein it in so that they can also maintain relationship values that are important to society. Genetic engineering doesn't awaken great enthusiasm on the part of the author, but a chapter on educational methods and the perception of giftedness in China and Japan opens up some thought-provoking cultural perspectives.

The second section is at the same time stimulating and frustrating. It discusses the role of the family in nurturing giftedness, the prevalence of giftedness and how it is defined, and if and how "unique creative people" collaborate. These chapters seem to ask more questions than they answer. Asking questions that haven't been satisfactorily answered is, of course, the primary function of research, and this section leaves little doubt that we have much to discover about these areas.

The third section is titled "Conceptualizing and Reconceptualizing Giftedness," but it might well have "and then conceptualizing some more and reconceptualizing again" added to it. Three authors agonize over definitions for giftedness, genius, expertise, and talent. How do these concepts differ? How do they connect with one another? Who has them? How are they demonstrated? Is one "better" than the other? Do they all connect to form an umbrella of exceptional ability? If so, how?

As we finish this last section of the book, we realize that despite much outstanding research, hard work, high-level thinking, and earnest cogitation we still really don't know how we want to define giftedness. It exists. No one denies that, but at some level we are, deep down, uneasy with the idea of giftedness. We think perhaps if we call it talent, it won't be so bad. If we think of it as expertise, maybe it will seem less pretentious and more democratic. And since giftedness seems to be a good thing generally, can't we fix it so that lots and lots of people are gifted? These comments are by no means meant to disparage the contents of this section, but rather to acknowledge that these authors make it clear to us just how enormously difficult it is for educators, psychologists, sociologists, biologists, and other interested scholars to deal successfully with the phenomenon that we loosely call giftedness. We need to be gifted enough to keep working and finding answers.

JEAN DRUM is recently retired as a GATE classroom teacher in Garden Grove, California and currently teaches English as a second language at both Golden West Community College and Garden Grove USD. She is a former editor of the *Communicator*.

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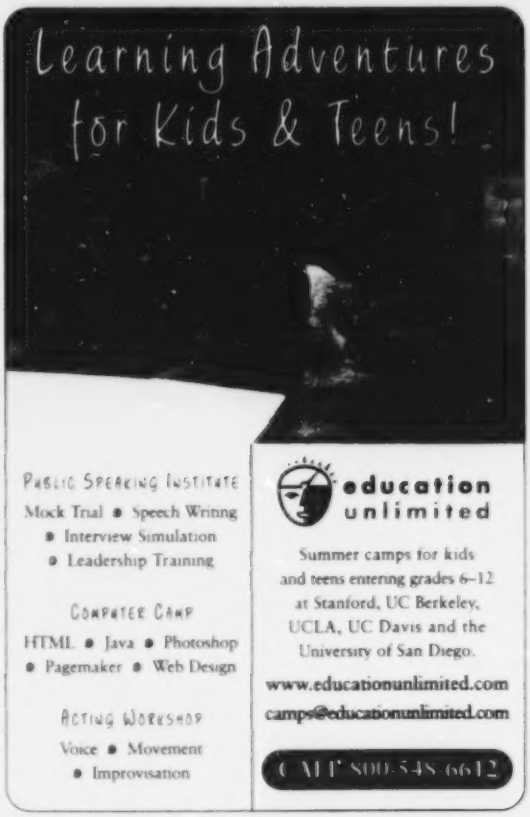
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We wish to give our readers information regarding new publications in the field of gifted education. Please note that this is a listing only, and should not be considered as an endorsement by *Gifted Education Communicator* or the California Association for the Gifted.

Aiming For Excellence: Annotations to the NAGC Pre-K–Grade 12 Gifted Program Standards
by Mary S. Landrum, Carolyn M. Callahan, Beverly O. Shaklee
$29.95; Prufrock Press, National Association for Gifted Children (joint publication)
Paperback (November 2000)
ISBN: 1882664728

And Still We Rise: The Trial and Triumphs of Twelve Gifted Inner-City High School Students
by Miles Corwin
$25.00; William Morrow & Co.
Hardcover - 432 pages (April 25, 2000)
ISBN: 0380976501

Assessing CPS Performance
by Donald J. Treffinger
$19.95; Prufrock Press
Paperback - 60 pages (June 1, 2000)
ISBN: 1882664663

Being Gifted in School
by Laurence J. Coleman, Tracy L. Cross
$49.95; Prufrock Press
Hardcover - 515 pages (July 30, 2000)
ISBN: 1882664590

Compendium of Research-Based Information on the Education of Gifted and Talented Students
by Karen S. Logan
$20.00; DIANE Publishing Co.
Paperback (August 2000)
ISBN: 0788185209

Creativity and Giftedness in Culturally Diverse Students (Perspectives on Creativity)
by Giselle Esquivel, John C. Houtz , Editors
$23.95; Hampton Press
Paperback (July 2000)
ISBN: 1572732253

Enhancing Creativity of Gifted Children: A Guide for Parents and Teachers (Perspectives on Creativity)
by Joe Khatena
$24.95; Hampton Press
Paperback (June 2000)
ISBN: 1572732296

Gifted Children and Legal Issues: An Update
by Frances A. Karnes, Ronald G. Marquardt
$22.00; Gifted Psychology Press
Hardcover (January 2000)
ISBN: 0910707340

Gifted Education Comes Home: A Case for Self-Directed Homeschooling
by Lisa Rivero, Maurice Fisher (Editor)
$16.00; Gifted Education Press
Spiral-bound - 60 pages (July 2000)
ISBN: 0910609403

Giftedness Has Many Faces: Multiple Talents and Abilities in the Classroom
by Starr Cline, Abraham J. Tannenbaum
$34.95; Winslow Press
Hardcover (April 2000)
ISBN: 1890817945

Helping Gifted Children Soar: A Practical Guide for Parents and Teachers
by Carol A. Strip, Gretchen Hirsch (Contributor)
$18.00; Gifted Psychology Press
Paperback (October 2000)
ISBN: 0910707413

Ayudando A Niños Dotados A Volar: Una Guía Práctica Para Padres y Maestros
by Carol A. Strip, Gretchen Hirsch
$18.00; Gifted Psychology Press
Paperback (February 2001)
ISBN 0-910707421

Jump Start: Ideas to Move Your Mind
by Beatrice J. Elye, Catherine A. Southwick (Contributor)
$18.00; Gifted Psychology Press
Paperback (January 2001)
ISBN: 0910707405

Meeting the Social and Emotional Needs of Gifted and Talented Children
by Michael J. Stopper (Editor)
$27.95; David Fulton Publishers
Paperback (June 2000)

Methods and Materials for Teaching the Gifted and Talented
by Frances A. Karnes, Suzanne M. Bean, Editors
$49.95; Prufrock Press
Hardcover - 745 pages (June 1, 2000)
ISBN: 1882664582

On the Edge and Keeping on the Edge: The University of Georgia Annual Lectures on Creativity (Publications in Creativity Research)
by E. Paul Torrance (Editor), Russell H. Yeany, University of Georgia
$65.00; Ablex Publishing Corp
Hardcover (April 2000)
ISBN: 1567504981

On the Social and Emotional Lives of Gifted Children
by Tracy L. Cross
$19.95; Prufrock Press
Paperback (2000)
ISBN: 188266473

The Pretenders: Gifted People Who Have Difficulty Learning
by Barbara P. Guyer, Sally E. Shaywitz
$17.95; High Tide Press
Paperback (January 2000)
ISBN: 1892696061

Stand Up for Your Gifted Child: How to Make the Most of Kids' Strengths at School and at Home
by Joan Franklin Smutny
$14.95; Free Spirit Publishing
Paperback - 160 pages (March 2001)
ISBN: 1575420880

Standards and Benchmarks for Education of Gifted & Talented
by Lois F. Roets
$39.00; Leadership Publishers
Ring-bound (January 2000)
ISBN: 0911943722

Talents Unfolding: Cognition and Development
by Reva C. Friedman, Bruce M. Shore (Editors)
$39.95; American Psychological Association (APA)
Hardcover (January, 2000)
ISBN: 1557986436

Uniquely Gifted: Identifying and Meeting the Needs of the Twice Exceptional Student
by Kay Kiesa (Editor)
$34.95; Avocus Publishers
Paperback (July 2000)
ISBN: 189076504X

Whatever Happened to the Quiz Kids?: The Perils and Profits of Growing Up Gifted
by Ruth Duskin Feldman, Chuck Schaden
$23.95; iUniverse.com
Paperback (September 2000)
ISBN: 0595007279

You Know Your Child Is Gifted When...: A Beginner's Guide to Life on the Bright Side
by Judy Galbraith, Ken Vinton (Illustrator), Pamela Espeland (Editor)
$10.95; Free Spirit Publishing
Paperback (June 2000)
ISBN: 1575420767

Recent Issues of *Communicator* Available

Vol. 31, No. 1, Winter 2000

Mathematics and Science in Gifted Classrooms

Articles include:

- Developing and Serving the Needs of Mathematically Promising Students by Linda Jensen Sheffield
- A Vision of Science that Can Decrease Perfectionism by Robert Arthur Schultz
- The Art of Teaching Science to the Gifted by Richard Boolootian
- Mathematically Gifted Girls by Kari Sharif-Freidig

Vol. 31, No. 2, Spring 2000

Identification of Gifted Children

Articles include:

- The On-going Dilemma of Effective Identification Practices in Gifted Education by Joyce VanTassel-Baska
- When a Child Doesn't Make GATE by Jackie Linn
- Roles and Responsibilities by the Communicator staff
- Nontraditional Screening by Sandra Kaplan, Emma Rodriguez, and Victoria Siegel

Vol. 31, No. 3, Summer 2000

Encouraging Passion, Leadership, and Ethics in Gifted Youth

Articles include:

- Gifted Education and the Romance of Passion by Felice Kaufmann
- The Risky Business of Leadership by Maureen Neihart
- I'm a Noun, Not an Adjective: Nurturing Leadership in Gifted Young Women by Hilda Rosselli
- The Development of Leadership and Gifted Youth by Frances Karnes and Jane Chauvin

Vol. 31, No. 4, Fall 2000

Serving Highly and Profoundly Gifted Children

Articles include:

- Defining the Few by Annette Revel Sheely and Linda Kreger Silverman
- Regardless of Age…Making Radical Acceleration Work by Jill Howard
- Overexcitability and the Highly Gifted by Sharon Lind
- The Problem of Pain by Stephanie Tolan

The CAG Office carries a limited supply of past issues of the Communicator. They are available at a cost of $5.00 per copy plus shipping. Call the office at 310-215-1898 to make your request.

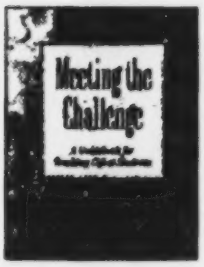
CAG PUBLICATIONS

Advocating for Gifted English Language Learners

An Activity Handbook for Professional Development and Self-Study

Item No. P-05 $12.00/copy

This guidebook presents an overview of the gifted English language learner. The activities can be used for inservice or for individual self-study. Text in English and Spanish.



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A Guidebook for Teaching Gifted Students

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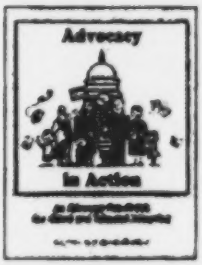

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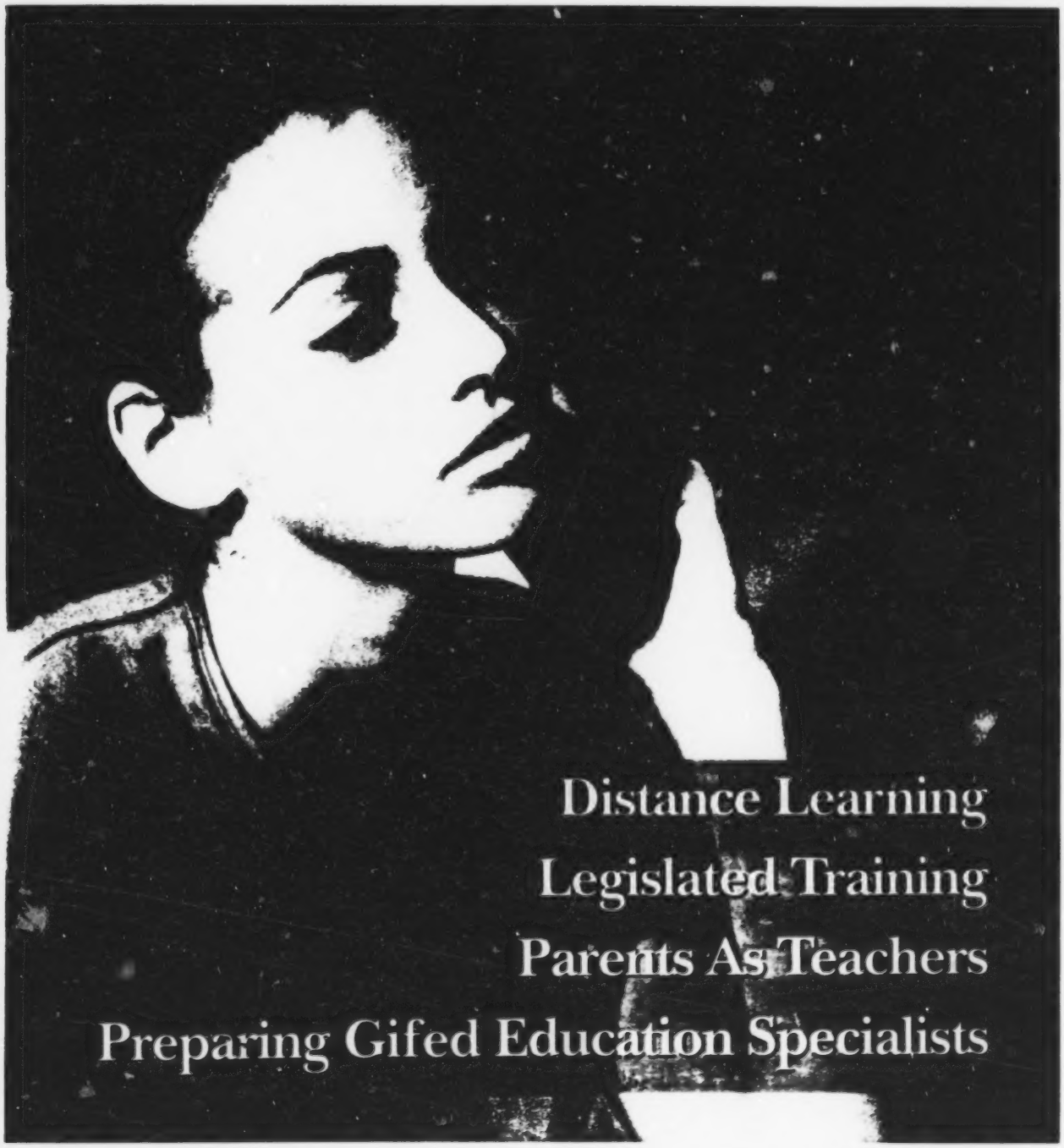
A Journal for Educators and Parents



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Professional Development

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A Journal for Educators and Parents

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History and Social Science for Gifted Learners

- National Standards
- Primary Sources on the Web
- Social Science and Public Service
- Using Autobiographies
- Problem-based Learning
- Using Historical Fiction
- Student Projects
- Resources

Winter (December 2001) - Equity and Excellence

Spring (March 2002) - Social and Emotional Needs

Summer (June 2002) - Assessment

JULY 9–20, 2001
Neag Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development & Connecticut State Department of Education
"Confratute 2001"
University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT
860-486-4826
www.gifted.uconn.edu

JULY 13–15, 2001
SENG (Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted)
"Diverse Social and Emotional Needs of the Gifted: Remove the Barriers and Release the Power"
Hilton Irvine/Orange County Airport, Irvine, CA
602-399-9090
www.SENGifted.org

JULY 31–AUGUST 4, 2001
World Council for Gifted and Talented Children
14th Biennial World Conference
"The World of Information: Opportunities and Challenges for the Gifted and Talented"
Barcelona, Spain
818-368-7501
E-mail: worldgt@earthlink.net
www.worldgifted.org

AUGUST 19–20, 2001
Fourth Biennial Australasian International Conference on the Education of Gifted Students
"Creativity and Diversity"
Hilton on the Park
East Melbourne, Australia
E-mail: skantzos.betty.b@edumail.vic.gov.au
613-9637-2304
www/sofweb.vic.edu.au/futures

SEPTEMBER 21–23, 2001
Annemarie Roeper Symposium 2001
4th Annual Symposium on the Intricate World of the Gifted Individual
"Toward Wholeness: Mind, Heart, Body, & Spirit"
O'Hare Marriott, Chicago, IL
Contact: Ray Swassing, swasing.1@osu.edu or
Betty Meckstroth, BetMeck@aol.com
www.xsnrg.com/roeper/index2.html

SEPTEMBER 30–OCTOBER 2, 2001
Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education
"Steer the Course to Excellence"
Crowne Plaza, Grand Rapids, MI
734-677-4404
www.geocities.com/lkaiser_1823

SEPTEMBER 30–OCTOBER 2, 2001
Iowa Talented and Gifted Association
"Mindful Connections: Creating Links for Iowa's Gifted"
Five Season's Hotel, Cedar Rapids, IA
515-225-2323
www.uiowa.edu/~itag

OCTOBER 4-6, 2001
Kansas Association for the Gifted Talented & Creative
Capitol Plaza Hotel, Topeka, KS
316-799-2315
www.kgtc.org

OCTOBER 11–12, 2001
Wisconsin Association for Talented & Gifted
"Gifted Kids in Focus: Differentiation & Beyond"
Olympia Resort, Oconomowoc, WI
920-991-9177
www.focol.org/~watg

OCTOBER 12–13, 2001
Washington Association for Educators of the Talented & Gifted (WAETAG)
"Wings to Fly"
Doubletree Inn, Seattle, WA
www.waetag.org

OCTOBER 14–16, 2001
GIFTED ASSOCIATION OF MISSOURI (GAM)
20th GAM Conference
Tan-Tar-A Resort, Lake of the Ozarks, MO
816-380-2412
www.mogam.org

OCTOBER 20, 2001
Minnesota Council for Gifted and Talented
O'Shaughnessy Education Center, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul Campus
"On Behalf of Gifted Kids"
952-927-9546
www.mcgt.net

NOVEMBER 1-3, 2001
Virginia Association for the Gifted
Ninth Virginia Conference for the Gifted
"Educating for Equilibrium: The Whole Child"
Williamsburg Marriott, Williamsburg, VA
804-365-4551
www.vagifted.org

NOVEMBER 7–11, 2001
National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)
48th Annual Convention
"Bridging New Frontiers"
Cincinnati Convention Center, Hyatt and Regal Hotels, Cincinnati, OH
202-785-4268
www.nagc.org

DECEMBER 5-8, 2001
Texas Association for Gifted and Talented
24th Annual Conference
"Gifted Students in the Global Community"
San Antonio, TX
512-499-8248 x205
www.txgifted.org

If your organization has a state or national event planned, please contact Shirley Ching at schingl30@aol.com to list your information.

Professional development is an essential component of any gifted education program. Cathy Barkett says it best in her Educational Trends column: "...you can have the best standards, the highest quality instructional materials, and the most defensible assessment system in the world, but they make very little impact without good teaching." Or good parenting, or good counseling, or good administrative support for that matter.

In the early '70s there were few training opportunities in California for a young teacher given her first assignment teaching middle school gifted students. I remember my frustration when trying to shape curriculum with no local guidelines and few resources. What a joy when the opportunity came to attend my first conference sponsored by the California Association for the Gifted. Here were people who not only shared my enthusiasm for teaching gifted students, but were willing to share their expertise and experience. It was a long wait, however, until the next year's conference time rolled around again.

Even today training in gifted education is hard to find, especially in some parts of the country. In this issue we present important information for all stakeholders in gifted education: Classroom teachers as major potential beneficiaries are a given, but we also offer articles addressed parents, coordinators, counselors, and site administrators. We also provide different models of professional training and resources for local people to choose from.

James Gallagher of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill challenges us with a Call to Action in discussing the need for training specialists to provide appropriate learning experiences for gifted students. He also delves into alternative models of personnel preparation, as well as the roles to be played by local leaders, institutions of higher education, and professional associations.

Cheryll Adams of Ball State University describes how her university provides for distance learning in training people for gifted education. An individual can take all the course work necessary to obtain an Indiana endorsement in gifted education by electronic means, accommodating students with busy schedules and disparate geographic locations.

Evelyn Hiatt and Ann Wink of the Texas Education Agency share information about the Texas legislation requirement that all educators—administrators and counselors as well as teachers—have specific training in gifted education. They acknowledge that the requirement is minimal, but consider it essential for improving professional development in gifted education in Texas.

In addressing specific stakeholders, Priscilla Shaver offers coordinators suggestions on how to develop or strengthen an advisory council in order to make the local program more effective. Carolyn Cooper provides practical no-nonsense advice for site principals in their school leadership roles. Richard Olenchak addresses the much overlooked area of counselor training; almost no school counselor in the country receives training in the special needs of gifted learners and he offers a model that local schools and districts could use to establish such training. Parents are also an important component of professional development as Sylvia Rimm points out in her article, Parents as Teachers and Learners. And for teachers we offer an article describing summer options for training, as well as a thoughtful article by Del Siegle on awareness training to avoid bias when making referrals in gifted education.

You will find a new department in this issue, Especially For New Teachers. This was suggested to me by a former student who had just begun his first middle school assignment of teaching gifted students. He expressed the need for "nuts and bolts" items that teachers new to gifted education can use while becoming acclimated in the field. The first contribution is by Jerry Flack of the University of Colorado at Denver. He provides us with his list of ten Must-Have Books in Gifted Education. The list is intended for new teachers, but experienced educators may well benefit from examining it and comparing it to their own list of ten must-have books.

Launching of the *Gifted Education Communicator* was exciting, and we are very pleased by the positive response it has received. We hope you will continue to share your ideas for improvement and to request specific topics that will help you and your colleagues enhance your effectiveness as indispensible providers of education for gifted children. ■

—MARGARET GOSFIELD, Editor

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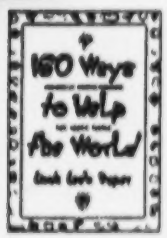

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Tailoring Professional Development

BY CATHERINE BARKETT

Professional development is this year's hot topic in education reform discussions. Almost all states have standards and statewide assessment systems, and many are working to provide teachers with curriculum materials that align. But there is a growing realization that you can have the best standards, the highest quality instructional materials, and the most defensible assessment system in the world, but they make very little impact without good teaching. President Bush and many state governors have proposed professional development activities designed to increase the content knowledge and teaching ability of classroom teachers. The most ambitious proposal to date is the "Intensive Professional Development in Reading and Math Initiative," from California's Governor Gray Davis. It provides $830 million over three years to districts to support training for 250,000 teachers. If legislation passes to implement this plan, districts in California will be able to qualify for $2500 per teacher (twice that amount for elementary teachers who receive training in both reading and math) if they provide professional development that is tied to the new standards-based instructional materials recently adopted by the State Board of Education.

When you have recovered from contemplating the enormity of this professional development undertaking, think back over the professional development opportunities you have had in your career, and ask yourself how effective they have been. You'll probably recall large rooms, overhead projectors or videos, perhaps some group activities, and smiling presenters. Now ask yourself which of these activities had any impact on your effectiveness in your work or your personal life. Is it a short list? Sadly, most professional development activities fail to make any positive lasting effect on the participants.

If you are one of those lucky enough to have benefitted from effective professional development, ask yourself what made them so. Change does not happen easily. Just as research tells us that many students must encounter a new word as many as 10 or 12 times in order to attach meaning to it, new behaviors usually have to be practiced many times in order to make them habits. If you did participate in professional development that had a lasting impact on your life, you probably began to use the new ideas and behaviors immediately, while the training was fresh in your mind.

If you think about how professional development in education is typically organized, you will see that it is generally not designed for maximum effectiveness. For one thing, professional development activities are designed for educators in general, not for teachers of the gifted, for example; therefore there is little chance that it will be specifically relevant or relevant for the latter.

Time schedules and teachers' contracts dictate when and for how long professional development will occur in school districts. Brain research tells us to train in small doses and reflect, so that there is sufficient time for the new information to be processed from short- to long-term memory. Nevertheless, we tend to organize professional development in relatively long periods of time, such as a day, or a week, and we cram as much training in as we can. Summer institutes, such as the 40-hour course in algebra, have become very popular. This model offers teachers sophisticated content and method, such as using the Pythagorean theorem to derive the line-of-sight distance formula in August, and expects teachers to remember the content and the recommended teaching sequence six to eight months later when they reach the appropriate point in the curriculum.

As teachers and administrators plan to provide professional development in their schools, how can we maximize the chances that the money and time will be well spent? How can we design professional development that is tailored to the particular needs of teachers and students, provided in small doses throughout the year, and organized in such a way that it helps each participant be a better teacher today, tomorrow, and next week? The following suggestions are offered with teachers in mind, but the same principles apply to professional development for people in other roles and with other responsibilities:

1. Survey the participants beforehand, and tailor the professional development to their needs, and those of the populations of students they teach. This sounds so simple, and yet how often is it done?
2. Design professional development so that it makes the participants' lives and jobs easier. Teachers are often overwhelmed with competing responsibilities. A professional development activity that prepares them for what they will be teaching tomorrow, next week, and next month, and from which they leave feeling organized, better prepared, and enthusiastic, will be much more effective than one that imposes new responsibilities on an already overcrowded schedule.
3. Tie the professional development directly to the curriculum the teacher is using, especially when new instructional materials have just been adopted. To increase the teachers' repertoire of effective practices such as curriculum compacting, for example, show teachers how to do this by application to a history unit they may be starting next week. Make the connections between the professional development and the day-to-day classroom activities explicit. If the instructional resources are comprehensive, they will include suggestions or materials for differentiating instruction for gifted and talented pupils.
4. Provide professional development in small doses, and design activities for teachers to try in their classrooms immediately, so that they can practice while the training is fresh in their minds. Build into the schedule a time when participants will come back together to discuss what they tried, and how it worked. If possible, ensure that the professional development system is designed so that someone checks back with the participants periodically to observe their progress and encourage continued implementation of effective practices. ■

CATHERINE BARKETT is currently California Curriculum Consultant for McDougal Littell, part of Houghton Mifflin.

"How can parents support a child's passion?"

SALLY WALKER

Whoever said that parenting is easy has never been a parent! Parenting a child with a passion is a special challenge. It may take you into areas that you did not know about, and may never have cared about knowing. It may at times try your patience. You have produced a dinosaurologist! You may be tired of living with, hearing about, eating, sleeping, and thinking about dinosaurs. Be thankful! It could be live reptiles that capture your child's passion.

There are certain things to help and support the child who has become so impassioned by a particular interest and who is so hungry for information. First of all, don't be threatened by a belly button high expert. You have lived longer, have more experiences, and are wiser. You are still in charge, even though there will be days when you may not feel this way. That's natural. This child expert may one day qualify for a scholarship, find a cure for one of the world's ills, or help others. Take pride in your child's expertise and give support for what your child does.

Supporting the learning associated with a passion is not always as easy as it sounds. It means extra trips to craft or other supply stores. It entails going to the library for extra books, or enrolling in a special class. It means monitoring the computer while your expert searches for new sites and people with whom to chat.

This is the ideal time to teach research skills. Once your expert has the topic in mind, assist in determining the pertinent questions. What does he want to know? How will she find out? What sources of information will be best to use? Other basic skills may include: making searches, locating information, taking notes on cards, and jotting down sources for later reference. Encourage your expert to try different forms of final products: written, oral, visual, kinesthetic, or technological. She can have fun putting the research information into a form that can be shared and enjoyed by others. Remind him to credit sources.

Share with your child how to determine the reliability of a source. Just because something is in print does not mean that it is true. What might be the possible hidden agendas? What would the writer have to gain by leading people to think this is true? What is the background of the source? What experience has the source had? What credentials does the source have?

Explore careers that relate to the passion. Some student's early passions stay with them and grow. If they can find a career that includes their love of learning, their sense of fulfillment may increase. Interview people who have chosen the career. Share interview skills. Find out what skills are involved and what schooling is required. It's never too early to start planning, saving, and setting goals.

ILLUSTRATION BY JON PEARSON

"Oh the Places You'll Go..."

Find a mentor for your child who shares the same passion. It may not be an age peer, but an intellectual peer. Learning can come from a retired person who has the same hobby, the "resident expert" who lives on the other side of town, or a relative. Sharing the joy of the subject is exciting and rewarding. An added benefit is that it can lead to networking.

Gifted and talented children require *more* of parents. Because your child is more intense, intelligent, aware, extreme, and persevering, he demands more from you, his parents. Usually more time is required, time to answer or research questions, time to nurture curiosity, time to work with the school and teachers, time to pursue the area of interest, time for practice and scheduling. Become more involved with the school. Not all interest areas are covered by the basic school curriculum. Because of this you may need to work with the school to make adjustments and allowances for special lessons and practices. Time again is an issue. Driving time to lessons, to practices, to visit with peers with similar interests must also be considered.

All parents need to applaud and encourage their children's efforts. And in the case of parenting gifted and talented children, they may face additional responsibilities of locating more resources and opportunities. This may mean making more monetary and time commitments. It may mean monitoring of goals and progress, setting schedules, rules, and expectations. As children become older, demands on parents' time, finances, and emotional resources tend to increase.

With all the other responsibilities facing parents, why should they wish to sacrifice further in order to promote a talent or passion? In part, of course, to be a parent is to feel a responsibility for the fullest development of a child's potential. And in addition, the experience of promoting and observing this development is a source of joy. Shared family time has its own great value and sharing the child's passion by fostering it is one way of drawing the family together. The whole family enjoys and learns. As Dr. Seuss wrote, "Oh the Places You'll Go..." ■

SALLY WALKER is Executive Director of the Illinois Association for Gifted Children and is a nationally known speaker and writer in gifted education. She is the author of *The Survival Guide for Parents of Gifted Kids* and co-author of *Teaching Young Gifted Children in the Regular Classroom*.

PARENTS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Are you one who thinks that when it comes to professional development, parents sit on the sidelines while the schools do their thing? Wrong! Parents need to be involved in this aspect of education as in everything else. Improved professional training means your child will get a better education. So, what can you do? Here are some ideas from members of the CAG Board of Directors.

Individual Support Activities

- Join a parent group so you are kept up to date on professional development opportunities.
- Attend training sessions yourself so you are knowledgeable about the field of gifted education.
- Learn the language of education in order to ask questions that will lead to better training.
- Collect information about specific training opportunities and share them with other parents and educators.
- Assist your child's teacher or school librarian in setting up a library of gifted education resources for parents and educators.
- Contribute a book or other resource on gifted education to your child's teacher or school library.
- Investigate how teacher and parent training fits into your district's plan for gifted education.
- Invite your child's teacher to attend a workshop with you.
- Volunteer for your school's site council or advisory committee so you will be in a position to advocate for professional training.
- Volunteer for your district's gifted advisory committee and advocate for professional training.
- Be a community advocate for professional training, pointing out its importance when parents complain that they must find baby-sitters for their children on professional training days.

Group Support Activities

- Provide scholarships for both parents and educators to attend professional training classes, workshops, and conferences.
- Organize a speaker series on specific topics pertinent to gifted education and schedule it at a convenient time for both teachers and parents.
- Lobby district administration for parent and educator training in gifted education.
- Lobby the school board to offer greater incentives for educators to take professional training in gifted education.
- Sponsor a team (teacher, parent, administrator) to attend a specific professional training event.
- Preview and make recommendations for purchase of professional training resources.
- Purchase books on gifted education for the district or school professional library.
- Organize a local conference on gifted education.
- Sponsor a presenter for educator and/or parent training.

Early Preparatory Learning
Magellan Day School, EPL

For Children Who Love to Learn

- Develops academic rigor and creativity.
- Provides opportunities to struggle with complex ideas.
- Promotes active involvement in science and computer technology.
- Encourages understanding and appreciation of the perceptions of other learners.
- Develops academic, social, and leadership abilities to support learning over the life course.
- Focuses on learning, not competition and grades.

Enrollment is ongoing.
To request application materials or receive more information, contact:

The Wisconsin Center for Gifted Learners
217 West Dunwood Road
Milwaukee, WI 53217
414-351-4441
Fax: 414-351-9792
Email: wcgl@execpc.com
URL: http://execpc.com/~wcgl

Developing Dimensions

Saturdays and Summer 2001

The Wisconsin Center for Gifted Learners
217 West Dunwood Road, Milwaukee, WI 53217
414-351-4441
Fax: 414-351-9792, Email: wcgl@execpc.com,
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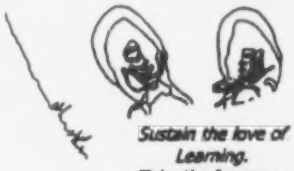

Sustain the love of Learning.
Take the Journey...

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Summer Options for Professional Development

Take in a summer session to hone your teaching skills

BY SHIRLEY CHING

Teaching the gifted is exhilarating—all those drummers marching to different beats in one classroom. Many view their first assignment in gifted education as a gift, a reward for years of devoted service, innovative teaching practices, or popularity with students, parents, and administrators. Then reality sets in. Though teaching the gifted has unique rewards, it also has unique challenges that demand shifts in attitude, technique, pacing, and skills.

The fortunate few have mentors knowledgeable in the field whose advice and guidance paves the road to success. A few others teach in districts that prepare their teachers with quality staff development programs in gifted education. Most teachers are not so fortunate. Gifted education is rarely a priority or adequately funded. Experts in the field are scarce. Those new to gifted education discover that any help offered is like the blind leading the blind. The resource specialists and administrators in the district may never have taught the gifted, or their teaching was long ago and perhaps never effective.

Resourceful teachers read and attend workshops, but the wealth of information tends to overwhelm them. Full-time teachers rarely have time to weed through the research or integrate all the ideas generated from workshops into an meaningful whole. After a year or two of teaching the gifted, the complexity of the task becomes apparent. Teachers discover that teaching the gifted involves a thorough grounding in their content area, more complex resources, an understanding of the psychological and social implications of giftedness, more extensive curriculum planning, and longer hours grading.

To best serve their gifted students and not waste time reinventing the wheel, teachers need help in mastering the art and science of gifted education. Summer is the ideal time for most teachers to develop that mastery, but what options are available? Information for the following sample summer options pertain to the year 2001, but all are ongoing programs and offered on a yearly basis.

Conference and Family Vacation Combination

Teachers, administrators, and parents who are short on money and time may prefer to combine their professional development with a family vacation. Conferences offer a choice of workshops that meet individual needs and personalize the experience for the gifted education participant. Thoughtful selection of sessions can make the conference an outstanding learning vehicle. The 15th International Conference on the Autonomous Learner Model sounds promising in this category of summer options:

The 15th International Conference on the Autonomous Learner Model
June 26 - July 1, 2001
Estes Park Center/ YMCA of the Rockies
Estes Park, Colorado
800-345-2577
E-mail: alpspublishing@aol.com
www.alpspublishing.com/conference/lineup.html

Located just minutes from Rocky Mountain National Park, the Estes Park Center/YMCA of the Rockies, a modern, full-service conference center and family resort, is the site for the 15th International Conference on the Autonomous Learner Model (ALM). Participants and their families can use all the camp facilities and are housed in private rooms with baths. All meals are included. Day programs sponsored by the YMCA for children over three years old are offered for a separate fee.

The conference opens with a three-hour presentation on the Revised Autonomous Learner Model by authors George Betts and Jolene Kercher. Sixteen 70-minute sessions are offered each day on a variety of topics. Participants may attend 16 sessions during the conference.

Following is a sampling of sessions offered:

- A model for designing differentiated curriculum by educators and learners
- Social and emotional development of the gifted
- Differentiated instruction
- Myths and realities about gifted learners
- Curriculum compacting
- Middle school gifted education

The conference fee is $495; room and board for a single adult ranges from $535 to$650. For adults sharing a room the fee is $385-$465, with an additional fee of $125 for a child sharing the parent's room. Each participant receives a three-ring handbook which contains descriptions and handouts for all presentations. Two semester hours of graduate credit are available from the University of Northern Colorado for $272.

Summer Institutes

Summer institutes are more intensive programs providing in-depth training and systematic instruction. This option does not lead to a degree but offers graduate credit. The CAG (California Association for the Gifted) Demonstration Summer School offers a unique opportunity for teachers of the gifted to convert the theory behind differentiated curriculum into the practice of differentiated instruction.

CAG Demonstration Summer School
August 13-17, 2001
La Colina Junior High School
Santa Barbara, California
310-215-1898
E-mail: cagoffice@aol.com
www.cagifted.org

CAG's yearly summer school for teachers is in its seventh year. Under the direction of Sandra Kaplan, lectures, seminars, and workshops related to differentiated curriculum as well as observations of these theories and practices are scheduled over the five days of the institute. Teachers especially appreciate the demonstration classrooms in grades 1-8 in which master teachers of the gifted show them how to put into practice the knowledge and strategies they have just acquired. A weekend curriculum writing session is an added bonus for those wishing to extend

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their experience.

Sample topics for the novice gifted education teacher include the following:

- Differentiating the core curriculum in depth and complexity
- Thematic interdisciplinary units of study
- Models of teaching and their relationship to differentiating the curriculum
- Learning centers and independent study as strategies to differentiate the curriculum
- Nature and needs of gifted students: characteristics and psychosocial issues
- The emergent English language gifted student

Sample topics for the advanced gifted education teacher include the following:

- Beyond the icons of depth and complexity
- Including philosophy in the core curriculum
- Advanced strategies to promote reading and writing
- Performance indicators related to differentiating the core curriculum
- Bridges from advanced to sophisticated core content skill clusters

The cost of the institute is $425 and includes lunch (does not include the weekend curriculum-writing session). The sessions run daily from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Three continuing education credits are available through the University of Southern California for $250. CAG hotel rates are available.

Graduate Degree Programs

For teachers who want to specialize in gifted education and become leaders in the field, a graduate degree program may be desirable or necessary. Degree programs can develop teachers' expertise in working with the gifted, prepare them to coordinate or administer gifted programs at district or state levels, or develop the skills to train, research, or innovate. However, full-time teachers often have family or financial obligations that make full-time study impossible. Graduate programs that require only summer residencies may best meet their needs. The Three Summers Program at the University of Connecticut may be ideal.

Three Summers Program

The Talent Development Program
University of Connecticut
2131 Hillside Road, U-7
Storrs, CT 06269-3007
860-486-0616 Fax: 860-486-2900
E-mail: dsiegle@uconn.edu

The University of Connecticut offers a Three Summers Program leading to a Master of Arts degree or a Sixth-Year Diploma beyond the master's degree in gifted and talented education. The program requires three consecutive summers on campus and four distance learning classes. Most candidates complete their degrees with 36 units and 3-4 weeks for each of three summers in late June and early July.

The unique combination of features of Three Summers includes:

- Flexible scheduling with the same intensity and quality as the regular academic year's Talent Development Program
- Exceptional faculty including Joseph Renzulli and Sally Reis
- Fostering of creativity in participants so degree graduates not only acquire knowledge and skills to implement an effective gifted program, but also contribute creatively to the field
- Individual plans of study based on a candidate's interests, experience, and purpose
- Breadth and depth with required core courses and extensive offerings from participation in Confratute, UConn's summer conference/institute
- Continuous faculty-student communication, advisement, and mentoring via on-site conferences and e-mail correspondence

Offerings include:

- Creativity
- Curricular options for high ability learners
- Understanding the social and emotional needs of the gifted
- Research on talent development
- Advanced curriculum differentiation
- Curriculum compacting
- Problems, issues, and solutions to perfectionism
- Schoolwide Enrichment Model

Editor's Note:
The need for high quality professional development in gifted education is critical. Please share your summer program experiences with us. Address all reviews and recommendations to Shirley Ching at schingi30 @aol.com. ■

SUMMER INSTITUTES & WORKSHOPS

JUNE 21–22, 2001
Western Kentucky University
Summer Workshop
Lexington, KY
270-745-4301
kage@wku.edu

JUNE 24–29, 2001
Texas Association for the Talented and Gifted
Professional Development Summer Institute
Southwestern University, Georgetown, TX
512-499-8248
www.txgifted.org

JUNE 25–27, 2001
Center for Gifted Education, The College of William and Mary
Summer Institute: Integrated Curriculum Model
Williamsburg, VA
757-221-2362
http://cfge.wm.edu

JULY 9–20, 2001
Neag Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development & Connecticut State Department of Education
Confratute 2001
University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT
860-486-4826
www.gifted.uconn.edu

JULY 15–20 or JULY 22–27, 2001
University of Virginia
Curry School of Education
Sixth Annual Summer Institute for Educators on Dealing Effectively with Academic Diversity in Heterogeneous Classrooms - Exploratory and Advanced Institutes
804-924-7161

AUGUST 13–17, 2001
California Association for the Gifted
Demonstration Summer School and Parent Seminar
Santa Barbara, CA
310-215-1898
www.CAGifted.org

August 25, 2001
Western Kentucky University
New Teacher Institute
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, KY
270-745-4301
kage@wku.edu

A CALL TO ACTION

Preparing Specialists for Gifted Students

BY JAMES J. GALLAGHER

As we look forward to the 21st century and what it will hold for us as educators of gifted students, one of the most central unsolved problems is how to prepare a cadre of effective specialists who can excite and energize our gifted students.

I recently published an article in *Gifted Child Quarterly* entitled "Unthinkable Thoughts" (Gallagher, 2000), which included questions that are so painful to professionals that there is often an informal conspiracy of silence about them. The trouble is if we don't discuss them, we don't do anything about them either.

One of these thoughts was: Is there really such a thing as special personnel preparation for teachers of gifted students? Too often the specialist in gifted education has pasted together a course

"Specialists should be the general education teacher's window to t

here, a workshop there, and a summer institute somewhere else, to gain certification. So there are two central questions: Why does this hit-or-miss preparation happen? What can be done about it?

As is often the case in education, the answer to the question of why it happens is money or the lack of it. When we look at other specialties designed to teach children with disabilities, for example, we find that the Office of Special Education Programs in the US Department of Education has provided more than $90 million to higher education programs in these special education specialties (Twenty-first Annual Report to Congress, 1999). Without such a subsidy, few institutions of higher education would be involved in the preparation of special educators; the relatively small number of students in the various special education specialties makes it economically unfeasible for a college or university to carry sufficient faculty to conduct such a personnel preparation program.

Gifted education programs currently have no federal and few state subsidies for personnel preparation, and consequently there is only limited interest among higher education institutions to begin or maintain such programs. This means that if students wish to take higher education programs in this field, they must often travel long distances to find one, or must scrape together various substitutes and convince their state departments of education that their postgraduate efforts add up to a certificate in this field.

Recently, the California Association for the Gifted (CAG) prepared a set of recommended program standards (CAG, 2000) designed to specify what is required to effectively educate gifted students. Professional development was one of the important components, and two of the relevant standards are listed in Table 1. The standards are impressive, and we can hope they will be put into effect. But, while standards tell you where you want to be, they do not tell you how to get there, or even what happens if you don't get there.

Table 1. CAG Recommended Professional Development Standards

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Minimum

5.1.1M The district provides professional development opportunities related to gifted learners on a regular basis and based on a yearly needs assessment.

Commendable

5.1C The district encourages teachers completing professional growth hours for credential renewals to focus on gifted education as their area of growth.

Exemplary

5.4E A district professional development plan to accommodate different levels of teacher competency (novice, intermediate, advanced) is in place.

INSERVICE TRAINING

Minimum

5.4M Individuals' selected to conduct inservice for teachers of gifted learners have recognized knowledge or expertise in the area of gifted education.

Commendable

5.4C The district promotes the concept of teacher-to-teacher professional development in addition to contracting experts to conduct inservice. This may include the concept of peer coaching, applying the training-of-trainers model of inservice, and peer review discussions and sessions.

Exemplary

5.4E The district identifies support personnel both inside and outside the district with expertise in meeting the needs of gifted learners. Personnel are available for individual consultation, district, and school inservice presentations.

Do We Need Super Teachers?

Do we really need specialists in gifted education anyway? Can't general educators with some directed inservice experience handle the job? Let's consider that if the license for driving a car required the aspiring driver to demonstrate 1) the reactions and perceptions of a race car driver, 2) the eye-hand coordination of a successful athlete, and 3) the decision-making capabilities of a wise judge, there wouldn't be many cars on the highway. There would be a few, to be sure, since every now and then one could find such an exceptional driver. But the goal of engineering cars and highways has been to allow persons of modest or average skills to be able to operate the vehicle.

We are faced with an analogous situation when we demand or suggest all that a general education teacher should do to provide a fine education for gifted students, as well as meeting the needs of all other students. For example, Winebrenner (2000) suggests that the elementary classroom teacher could take some children who have mastered the regular math lesson and have a cluster group or subset of gifted students in math working their problems in base 5 instead of the traditional base 10.

Tomlinson (2000a) provides an instructive example of differentiation of lessons for a primary teacher working on compound words.

> Students' names are listed at the learning center; one of four colors is beside each name....For example Sam must decide the correct order of pairs to make familiar compound words.... Using materials in the blue folder Jenna will look around the classroom and in books to find examples of compound words. Using materials in the purple folder Tijuana will write a poem that uses compound words she generates to make the story interesting. ... In the green folders, Dillon will find a story that the teacher has written. It contains correct and incorrect compound words. Dillon will be a word detective, looking for "villains" and "good guys" among the compound words.

Let us think about these suggestions for differentiation for a moment. The first teacher must know enough about mathematics and different bases to evaluate the students' math exercises in base five. Tomlinson complains about hazy or fuzzy lessons when a teacher may ask a student to 'learn something about black holes.' But the assignment is fuzzy because the teacher's own knowledge about black holes (or base 5) is incomplete.

The teacher with the four different colored folders must create these differentiated exercises (probably the night before), and will

roader world of instruction and knowledge about gifted students"

NORTH CAROLINA MODULES

The state of North Carolina has one of the most extensive educational programs for gifted students in the United States. The state invests over 30 million dollars a year in this special field. The size of the program means there is a continual need for a large number of qualified teachers or specialists to fill the many positions available. However, there has been a distinct lack of higher education facilities in the state capable of providing a systematic personnel preparation program for certification in this field.

Key people in the field at the state level looked for some alternative to the standard higher education approach that was falling short of producing well-prepared teachers for local programs. Ann Harrison, Mary Ruth Coleman, and Judith Howard (1995) designed a series of modules that can be delivered at the local level; each module consists of a series of ten-hour experiences that enables teachers to accumulate sufficient experience to gain certification, either in combination with college and university courses, or workshops organized or approved by the State Department of Public Instruction.

These field-based programs were designed to parallel the standard college courses that lead to a certificate in this field.

North Carolina College Courses Leading to a Certificate in Gifted Education

Course I	Introduction to Gifted Education
Course II	Curriculum Differentiation—Implementing the Curriculum Framework I
Course III	Teaching/Learning Strategies: Implementing the Curriculum Framework II
Course IV	Problems and Issues in Gifted Education (Practicum)

There are 8-10 modules based upon a set of state adopted competencies that can be taken in each of these four courses. All teachers seeking certification must take a selection of these ten-hour modules in the areas of Introduction to Gifted, Differentiation of Content, and Teaching/Learning Strategies.

Another 30 modules have been outlined and developed that add to the original required modules, and teachers are encouraged to take some modules from each Core area to comprise their necessary hours for certification. For example, some of the modules fitting Core Course I: Introduction to Gifted Education, are #6 Underserved Populations and #11 Curriculum Compacting. Core Course II: Curriculum Differentiation could be complemented by #20 Creative Thinking and #23 School-wide Enrichment.

A cadre of 25-30 experienced professionals have been identified who are capable of presenting these modules. Using this consumer friendly approach (teachers can take one of these modules in a weekend) near their home base, many teachers have been able to achieve certification in the education of gifted students.

Harrison, A., Coleman, M. & Howard, J. (1995). *Personnel preparation: Academically gifted*. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

For more information about the North Carolina modules, contact Valerie Hargett at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Exceptional Children Support Team, 919-807-3987.

now be faced with the task of assessing these four different assignments plus those for the other twenty students in the class. The same problems exist for tiered assignments, lessons pitched at different conceptual levels for students of differing abilities. Essentially the educator is teaching a "class-within-a-class" and we must ask, where does one teacher get the time and energy to do all these things (Gallagher & Gallagher, 1994)?

To engage the classroom in problem-based learning, for example, the general educator must not only produce challenging ill-structured problems, but should have access to a range of materials to be ready when the students take off in all different directions in an effort to find data that will solve the given problem (Gallagher, Stepien, Sher, & Workman, 1995).

Are there teachers who can do all these things, and do them well? Yes, there are. You and I have met them. But they are as rare as the super drivers noted earlier. One shouldn't plan a program for gifted students, or any group of students, on the expectation of superhuman effort from extraordinary human beings. There just aren't that many around. The job of educators, similar to the automobile designers, is to create a learning environment where ordinarily capable teachers can be expected to perform effectively.

Rather than expecting superhuman efforts by individual teachers, there must be a team effort in which each member brings specific skills and talents to the tasks. And the team must have time for planning and preparation. One of the contributions of the middle school movement is that it has incorporated joint planning and team teaching into its approach (Slavin, 1991), but such planning and collaboration rarely appear in other school settings.

How to Differentiate the Program for Gifted Students?

If the school psychologist has his tests, and the pediatrician can write prescriptions, what is the nature of our specialty in educating gifted students? One of the key elements must be differentiation of the curriculum. We can take advantage of the fact that gifted students already have mastered much of the regular curriculum, and they provide a different set of challenges for educators (Reis, Burns & Renzulli, 1992). But differentiation does not just mean something different, it means lessons that provide important new skills or information to the gifted student. But how does one do that?

What Should Be the Focus of Training?

Before a proper discussion of the manner of personnel preparation can be held, we should first agree upon the nature of the service delivery model in which we wish such trained personnel to work. While the resource room or pull-out, model has been popular in the education of gifted students, it has now been augmented by a specialist who plays a support role for the general

education teacher (Clark, 1997).

Let us consider specialists in gifted education and what their role should be in such a team. They should operate as master teachers supporting and aiding the regular teacher with technical assistance, meaning regular access to materials, demonstrations, and advice. They should be the general education teacher's window to the broader world of instruction and knowledge about gifted students and their learning. Some of the skills and knowledge the specialist should master are the following:

- Ability to help regular teachers differentiate lessons so that particular content goals can be met, and knowledge of how to raise the conceptual level of lessons to meet the needs of gifted students (Gallagher & Gallagher, 1994).
- Development of or access to a library of differentiated lessons so that regular teachers do not have to create novel lessons on a daily basis.
- Ability to demonstrate how to engineer strategies such as cluster grouping and tiered assignments.
- Ability to gain access to materials that can make feasible such strategies as the problem-based learning approach.
- Ability to help the general education teacher compact lessons for particular students.
- Ability to apply special assessment procedures and devices to help evaluate the progress of gifted students.
- Knowledge and skills to cope with special problems such as underachieving gifted, LD gifted, and culturally diverse gifted.

One of our past and present mistakes has been to assume that all these skills must be possessed by one person instead of conceptualizing a team of people, each contributing particular expertise to the whole. If the goal is to produce individuals with these capabilities, then how do we do this? What alternative models of personnel preparation are available?

Alternative Models for Personnel Preparation

The traditional way to develop an educational specialty has been to supplement a standard certification program in elementary, middle, or secondary with an additional higher education graduate program in the specialty (Parker, 1996; Council for Exceptional Children, 2000). This "add on" approach has been successful in special education because of major federal subsidies that convinced higher education to invest faculty slots in areas such as mental retardation and learning disabilities (Kirk, Gallagher, & Anastasiow, 2000).

Lacking such subsidies, gifted education has had a strong presence in only a few institutions of higher learning; therefore, the traditional higher education means of establishing a cadre of specialists in this field has had to be supplemented by a variety of activities sponsored by state departments of education, professional associations, or other sources. What seems required is a practice-based theory of professional education (Ball & Cohen, 1999). Some of the models now in use are:

- ***North Carolina Modules***: A series of 10-hour modules encompassing the requirements for state certification in gifted education; local delivery of modules provides easy access for students.
- ***NAGC Academies:*** Short-term training institutes focusing on particular topics such as performance based assessments.
- ***Distance Learning***: Personnel preparation courses delivered by interactive television or website lessons.
- ***Summer Programs:*** Intense one or two week sessions focusing on personnel preparation content such as the annual Confratute at the University of Connecticut.
- ***Specific Skill Training:*** Institutes or workshops with the goal of student mastery in one or more sets of teaching skills such as problem-based learning.

Some of these models are described in greater detail in other sections of this issue.

Local Staff Development

The heavy use of local staff development programs to upgrade personnel in gifted education in many school systems suffers from a problem of quality control. There is inadequate assurance that instructors of these short-term workshops or seminars (too often such local sessions are one-shot affairs not linked to any larger plan or system of instruction) are sufficiently knowledgeable about the special needs of gifted students or the special methods of meeting those needs. At a minimum, the instructor should have credentials that assure those hiring the specialist that a quality presentation will be made. Both the NAGC standards and the California standards call for this requirement since this is a field that seems to attract more than its share of wandering troubadours selling dubious goods.

Also the teachers attending such sessions should be required to demonstrate a breadth of quality work, for example, through a portfolio of work, or the construction of differentiated units, or a paper on a related significant issue in gifted education. No credit should be given for such training without definitive evidence that the participant has mastered the instruction, and is able to demonstrate the ability to differentiate instruction and curriculum.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR GIFTED CHILDREN ACADEMIES

The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) recognizes the importance of personnel preparation in gifted education and has taken actions designed to upgrade the capabilities of its members. One important activity has been the development of NAGC Academies. These Academies are designed to:

- **Support on-going professional development for constituents and members of the field.**
- **Provide advanced level learning opportunities in focused topical options.**
- **Provide one option to support the NAGC Professional Achievement Certificate (PAC).**

To date, three academies have been held: performance-based assessment, curriculum differentiation, and program evaluation. The Professional Achievement Certificate is not designed to legally replace other certificates but, at present, is designed as a personalized mentoring experience. However, these Academies can be another small step in terms of the organization (NAGC) assuming greater responsibility for the professional development of its members.

For more information about the academies, contact NAGC at 202-785-4268.

The Production of Differentiated Materials – A Higher Education Role

The role of higher education in these alternative personnel preparation models has often been a problematic one for educators of the gifted. Since there is no federal subsidization as there is with other special education specialties, there has been a tendency to leave higher education personnel and institutions out of the personnel preparation planning for gifted students. Typically the alternative models mentioned earlier are presented by state or local personnel with little higher education participation; but that would seem to be an unwise choice or reaction.

One of the most pressing needs for personnel preparation programs is the availability of special materials designed to supplement the general curriculum. Such materials can be specific illustrations for differentiated lessons, or "back-up" materials to enrich particular school units. This is a production task well suited for higher education personnel, many of whom would be interested in these "organization of knowledge" goals and might require only modest compensation from community or state departments of education sources to become involved.

Role of Professional Associations

If these ideas seem reasonable, then we must address the question, "Who is going to bell the cat?" Who is going to see to it that the various alternatives of personnel preparation are put into action throughout the states? We know that higher education has not been a major player in this field with the exception of some outstanding individuals. We know that the thinly staffed state departments of education would be unlikely to carry out these strategies even if they could convince their superiors of the merits of the alternative methods.

We know also that such changes in personnel preparation do not occur by accident or coincidence, they require active development and attention. So when we say to each other, "Why doesn't someone do something about this?" the answer is, there is no "someone,"— just us. Our professional organizations must provide the leadership to get this done. The California Association for the Gifted has already developed standards which read very well. And it sponsors summer and weekend institutes to implement them. I am asking my own state, North Carolina, to establish a task force to develop a five-year plan for the upgrading of personnel preparation for gifted education. I would suggest that such a task force conduct the following:

- A survey of how many teachers need additional preparation and in what areas.
- A survey on personal preparation resources that are available, including potential summer programs, distance learning, module presentations, etc.
- Design of a phased-in action plan to increase the capabilities of personnel with small steps in year one, broadening to year five.

The attempt would be to create a necklace of learning and skills from a set of individual and separate instructional pearls.

"One shouldn't plan a program for gifted students, or any group of students, on the expectation of superhuman effort from extraordinary human beings."

One of the phrases that we have repeated over and over again in North Carolina is that the status quo is not an option. We can't meet the challenges of the twenty-first century information age with the limited organizations and resources we now have. But unless we can show precisely what is needed to reach our gifted students, we won't stand a chance of getting them.

Currently there is some federal legislation in the hopper, HR 490, The Gifted and Talented Students Education Act of 2001, which almost passed last session as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Reauthorization. Among other things this bill will authorize and provide help for states to support professional development. With President Bush supporting education, we can have some reasonable expectations for success and that will allow us to provide more support to teachers on the firing line than we have been able to do before.

I once presented a statement on what the cost was of *not* providing support in this fashion (Gallagher & Gallagher, 1994). What is the cost of the sonata never composed? The medical discovery never made? The political compromise to avoid war never achieved? It is hard to quantify such losses, but we should resolve that whatever that cost is, it is too high. A small investment in the teachers working with gifted students now can yield great returns later on. ■

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR GIFTED CHILDREN

The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) has a special Professional Development Division (PDD) chaired by Susan Hansford.

The primary purpose of the Professional Development Division is to improve the quality of personnel preparation programs in gifted education, and to further the development of leadership within the field of education for the gifted. Current division interest areas include:

- Inservice and staff development
- Leadership
- Administration
- Program standards for higher education

The Professional Development Division has been actively involved in the development of the NAGC Gifted Program Standards and other service publications for NAGC. The division regularly sponsors two projects: the Division Newsletter and the Administrators' Leadership Institute. The newsletter is mailed to division membership at least twice each year. The PDD Institute is held annually at the NAGC convention. Each institute focuses on current issues related to the goals of the Division.

Membership in the Professional Development Division consists of members in good standing of the National Association for Gifted Children with expressed interest and commitment to the goals of the Division. New members are welcome at any time. For additional information call NAGC at 202-785-4268 or check the website at www.nagc.org.

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JAMES J. GALLAGHER is the Kenan Professor of Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center. Gallagher has long been a standard bearer for professional training in the field of gifted education. He is the author of many articles and books including *Teaching the Gifted Child*.

UP CLOSE with James Gallagher

Editor's note: We asked James Gallagher to share with readers some of the experiences, people, and ideas that led him to the field of gifted education and that sustain his continued interests and efforts.

When I was about six, I went to a special school for gifted kids run by University of Pittsburgh. It was a very open, exciting kind of education where there were 15 kids in the class. The teachers were really good teachers. In fourth grade we had a debate about the Neutrality Act—when Roosevelt gave 50 destroyers to England. I didn't appreciate it at the time, of course, but afterwards, and after thinking about it, I realized that I had a really wonderful opportunity. I suppose I carried that over.

The person who started me out on gifted education was Sam Kirk, a preeminent special educator and my mentor at the University of Illinois. He didn't care a lot about gifted but used a project in gifted in the local schools to entice me to leave Michigan State and join the Institute for Research on Exceptional Children at Illinois.

When Sputnik came, Illinois got excited about the area of the gifted and passed some legislation which opened the door for a lot of special kinds of activities. At the University of Illinois, I started a research project with some money I got from the Office of Education, which I would not have been able to get had there not been a Sputnik. I just hit the right seam in history. We set up microphones and audiotapes and taped 200 classroom sessions and coded the thinking of gifted students and teachers as it was revealed by tape recordings. Out of those 200 sessions, I came away with an understanding about instructional strategies and how people were trying to work with these students. My book, *Teaching the Gifted Child*, really came largely out of that experience and all of that rich set of data that I was able to collect.

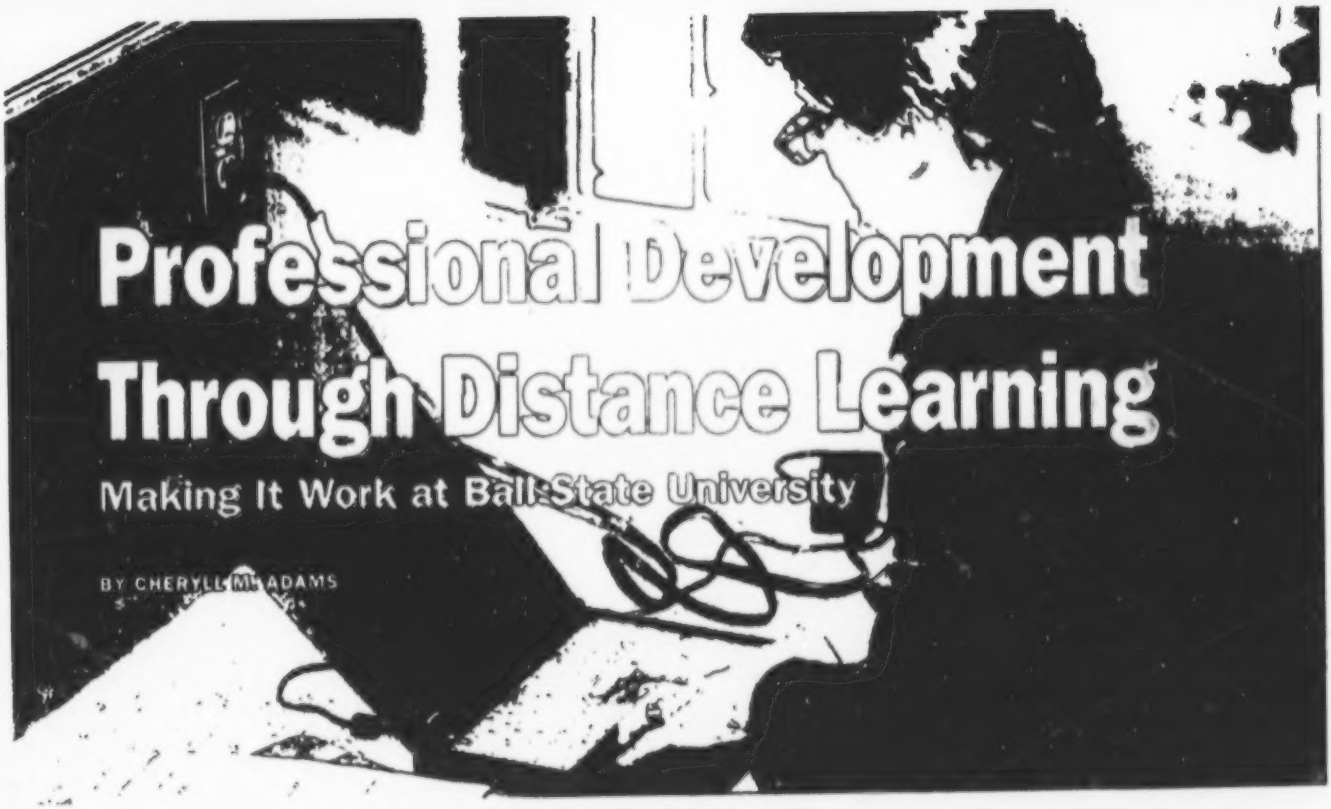
During the early seventies I became a regular contributor to the Leadership Training Institute run by Irv Sato with Sandy Kaplan and Jim Curry. Harry Passow was also a major contributor and it was my chance to interact with him from that time on. I became active in the professional associations after my three year stint in the US Office of Education as Bureau Chief to the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped and eventually became president of TAG, NAGC and the World Council. I also served as editor of the *Journal for the Education of the Gifted* for eight years and that was a wonderful way to keep in touch with what is happening in the field and occasionally shaping that direction.

During that time I had an outstanding student, Mary Ruth Coleman with whom I worked on the journal, and carried out a series of research projects on the intersection of gifted students with the middle schools movement and cooperative learning. We later became joint directors of STAGE (State Technical Assistance for Gifted Education) which led to the reform of education for the gifted in North Carolina. My five year interaction with a regiment of capable professionals here in gifted education in North Carolina helped me remain upbeat about our cause.

Finally, the emergence of my daughter, Shelagh, as a figure in the field was a satisfying and stimulating event. She coauthored the last *Teaching the Gifted Child* with me and her work in problem-based learning is, in my judgment, a major contribution.

I remain interested in policy development in this field and have tried to help the design of legislation that would provide some continued support in this field. The thing that keeps me going is the phenomenal youngsters that we deal with. They chart the upper limits of the human intellect for their age. Once you have seen a student solve Pascal's Triangle in about thirty seconds you know it is humanly possible to do that because the evidence is sitting right in front of you even if you don't know how he did it (incidentally, neither does he!).

Furthermore, there seems to be good evidence that even more remarkable products or feats lie ahead. That should be good enough motivation for anyone.



Professional Development Through Distance Learning

Making It Work at Ball State University

BY CHERYLL M. ADAMS

Now you can "go to class" anywhere

"You're getting your gifted endorsement how?!" This was the incredulous response one of my students received when she commented to a colleague that she was taking her third graduate level gifted class through distance learning. Distance learning can be broadly defined as an interaction between a teacher and student when they are separated by distance (Keegan, 1988). One of the earliest instances of distance learning within this broad definition was the correspondence course. A more narrow definition encompasses noncontiguous communication between teacher and learner using only technology to mediate communication (Garrison & Shale, 1987).

Actually, one can get the entire gifted endorsement from Ball State University through a combination of televised and Internet courses. Of course students can still choose the traditional classroom setting, or mix and match the different formats. Evaluations and conversations with participants indicate that students like the choices, and the distance learning classes provide an opportunity to fit professional development into a busy work and family schedule without the need for a long commute to campus. Distance learning via television and Internet is a rapidly evolving vehicle for course delivery in our technologically literate society. In this article, I will focus on programming in which the delivery may be synchronous (occurring in real time), asynchronous, or a combination of the two, coupled with either two-way audio/two-way visual or two-way audio/one-way visual.

Synchronous Programming

Until recently, all our gifted endorsement programming via distance learning was delivered in the synchronous format using both the two-way audio/two-way visual and two-way audio/one-way visual systems. An advantage of the two-way/two-way system, of course, is that both presenter and participant can see and hear each other in real time. Unfortunately, in this format, only four sites can be viewed at the same time. If there are more than four sites participating, the presenter has to constantly choose which groups to put on screen. This adds an additional element to be juggled along with the myriad of buttons and gizmos, and may lower the comfort level of the presenter!

In the two-way/one-way format, the participants see and hear the presenter, but the presenter only hears the participants. Under this system, many sites can be connected, since only the instructor is seen on the television screen. When the courses were offered on Saturdays, quite a few of our learners commented that they liked this method because no one could see them on-screen and they could attend class in their warm-ups and with no make-up! I will admit there are few other instructors who know their students by their voices rather than their faces.

Another series that we offered in two-way/one-way format was the Legacy 21 program. This was a series of eight programs over two years that dealt with nearly every aspect of gifted education. Hosted by Dean Roy Weaver of Ball State University's Teachers College, this series was broadcast over cable television complete with a toll-free number for viewers to call in their questions. Tracy Cross, Felicia Dixon, David Dixon, Vicki Vaughn, and I prepared and delivered the various segments covering social and emotional needs of gifted children, characteristics, programming, parenting, identification, assessment, and new trends in the field.

Asynchronous Programming

At Ball State, our main asynchronous format is the Internet. We currently offer Development of Creative Thinking, one course in the gifted endorsement, totally on the Internet. Developed by Mary Rizza, this course

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is popular even with students not interested in the gifted endorsement. Students view the ability to "come to class" at their convenience, by logging on to the course website, as a distinct advantage, particularly when trying to juggle work and family. At least one out-of-state university has enrolled students in this class because of low enrollment in its own on-site class.

Combination Programming

Currently three three-credit hour endorsement courses are offered which use a combination of televised and Internet classes. Using the Blackboard CourseInfo platform, a wonderful tool for developing Internet courses, these classes are taught with half the instruction televised in real-time through the two-way/one-way system, and half the instruction delivered via the Internet. All the students are school personnel—teachers, counselors, school psychologists, principals, and gifted and talented coordinators.

Broadcast once a week, the classes start at 3:30 p.m. and end at 5:00 p.m. During this time, new material is presented, students offer their opinions on the course readings as well as providing practitioners' insights through recounting their personal stories of gifted children in their classrooms. Because of the time delay between my asking a question and the student responding on the telephone line, the term "wait time" has definitely acquired new meaning! After the first day of class, students realize they may be called upon to respond just as in a traditional classroom, erasing any preconceived idea that distance learning is passive in nature.

Class Continuation Assignments on the Internet make up the additional hour and a half normally spent in the classroom with the instructor. See Figure 1 for a copy of the continuation assignment following the first class meeting.

Figure 1. Class Continuation Assignment

Class Continuation Assignment January 10

Please read the following article from the American School Board Journal: http://www.asbj.com/current/coverstory.html.

Write a two-page reaction paper, substantiating your arguments with research when possible. Be sure to identify when you are giving your own opinion, not backed by research.

Mail, e-mail, or use the file drop to submit your work.

Due January 16.

The continuation assignment expands what was covered in the first half of the class, but students complete it at their convenience rather than within the traditional three-hour time frame.

Students fax, e-mail, or upload files via CourseInfo to submit their assignments. There are two homework documents to be completed each week, the Process Journal and the Reading Reflection (see Figures 2 and 3).

When we want to share visually, students send their work to me to show in class on-screen. In addition, there are project pages within CourseInfo that allow students to upload files to a Group Page for everyone to view or download. Group work is facilitated by using pages designated for each group, allowing the members of that group to communicate with each other via a private chat room, discussion board, and an area to share files among themselves. The final outcome can be shared within a file area that can be accessed by all class members.

Announcements, course documents such as handouts and PowerPoint

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Are distance learning classes more expensive than regular classes?

Not at Ball State University. The fee structure is the same as that of regular classes.

If I live in California and want to take a Ball State class via the Internet do I pay out-of-state tuition?

No, there is no additional fee over and above the regular cost of tuition.

How do I get course material?

Books, including instructor reading packets, are ordered through a toll-free number provided to students upon registering for the class.

Do I have to use a special Internet provider?

No. You simply need access to the Internet and e-mail. Ball State will provide you with an e-mail account here, but you can change it to your own personal e-mail quite simply.

How do I become acquainted with my classmates?

Each student has a webpage established through the Blackboard platform. You go to your page, put in your information, and submit it. You then have an instant webpage. There is even a place for your photograph if you want to supply one. Students have access to each other's webpages.

What if I need a question answered or need to contact the instructor, especially if we are in different time zones?

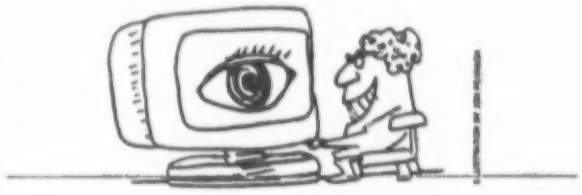
The instructors have e-mail and check it regularly. Unless an instructor is out of the office (and she will usually let you know that in advance), you will receive a reply very quickly.

Won't I be spending a small fortune on postage, mailing supplies, and FedEx to get my assignments to the instructor on time?

No! Within the course pages there is a Dropbox into which you can upload files to the instructor. The instructor can then download, read the assignment, make corrections, and upload the assignment to you. You may also send files via an e-mail attachment or by fax.

Are there other distance learning programs dealing with gifted education?

Yes. The University of North Carolina-Charlotte offers courses via two-way interactive video within North Carolina. The contact is Dr. Kristen Stephens (krstephe@email.uncc.edu). The University of South Florida offers an online master's degree in gifted education. The contact is Dr. Hilda Rosselli (Rosselli@tempest.coedu.usf.edu).



presentations, course information, files, external links, and assignments all have designated areas on the course website. For the convenience of both the instructor and students, there is an on-line grade book. Students can access their own grades privately at anytime. If the student knows she faxed an assignment and doesn't see a grade within 48 hours, I will usually get an e-mail from the student, checking to be sure I received the assignment. Each assignment is labeled with point value, and the students' accumulated points are always available, allowing them to estimate their grade at any time. A tape of each class is maintained by the Department of Continuing Education and can be accessed by a student who has to miss a class.

Figure 2. Process Journal

EDPSY 621 Reading Reflection
PROCESS JOURNAL ENTRY

Name:

Session Date:

What I learned in this session that will benefit me and/or my G/T program:

A word, phrase, or picture that describes this session:

What I plan to do with this information in the next 12 months:

Unanswered questions and/or comments:

The current classes offered via the Blackboard CourseInfo platform are password protected and are available only to those enrolled in the course. An earlier version of one of the assignments can be found at www.bsu.edu/classes/adams2/gift2520. Please feel free to access this website if you are interested in viewing a sample of the course's activities.

Figure 3. Reading Reflections

READING REFLECTIONS

Name:

Reading (chapters, articles, etc.):

Something that I read that squared with my belief:

Something that I read that is still circling in my mind:

Three points that I will remember from this reading:

First Homework Prompt for the Reading Reflection:

The Callahan article, "A Critical Self Study of Gifted Education," in the front of the reading packet is a good summary of the field over the last several decades. Please use this as your reading for the Reading Reflections paper for this week.

Due by Monday, January 15.

You may contact me at cadams@bsu.edu or visit the Center for Gifted Studies and Talent Development website at www.bsu.edu/teachers/services/ctr if you would like more information about the content of the distance learning courses. ■

CHERYLL M. ADAMS is the director of the Center for Gifted Studies and Talent Development at Ball State University in Muncie, IN where she also teaches courses on gifted education. She was affiliated with the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented for three years at the University of Virginia, and is a member of the Board of Directors of NAGC.

What Works vs

Professional Development for Edu

BY EVELYN HIATT AND ANN WINK

Leaders in gifted child education in Texas all agree that the staff development component of the Texas mandate is indispensable for a meaningful and effective program of gifted education.

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What's Best

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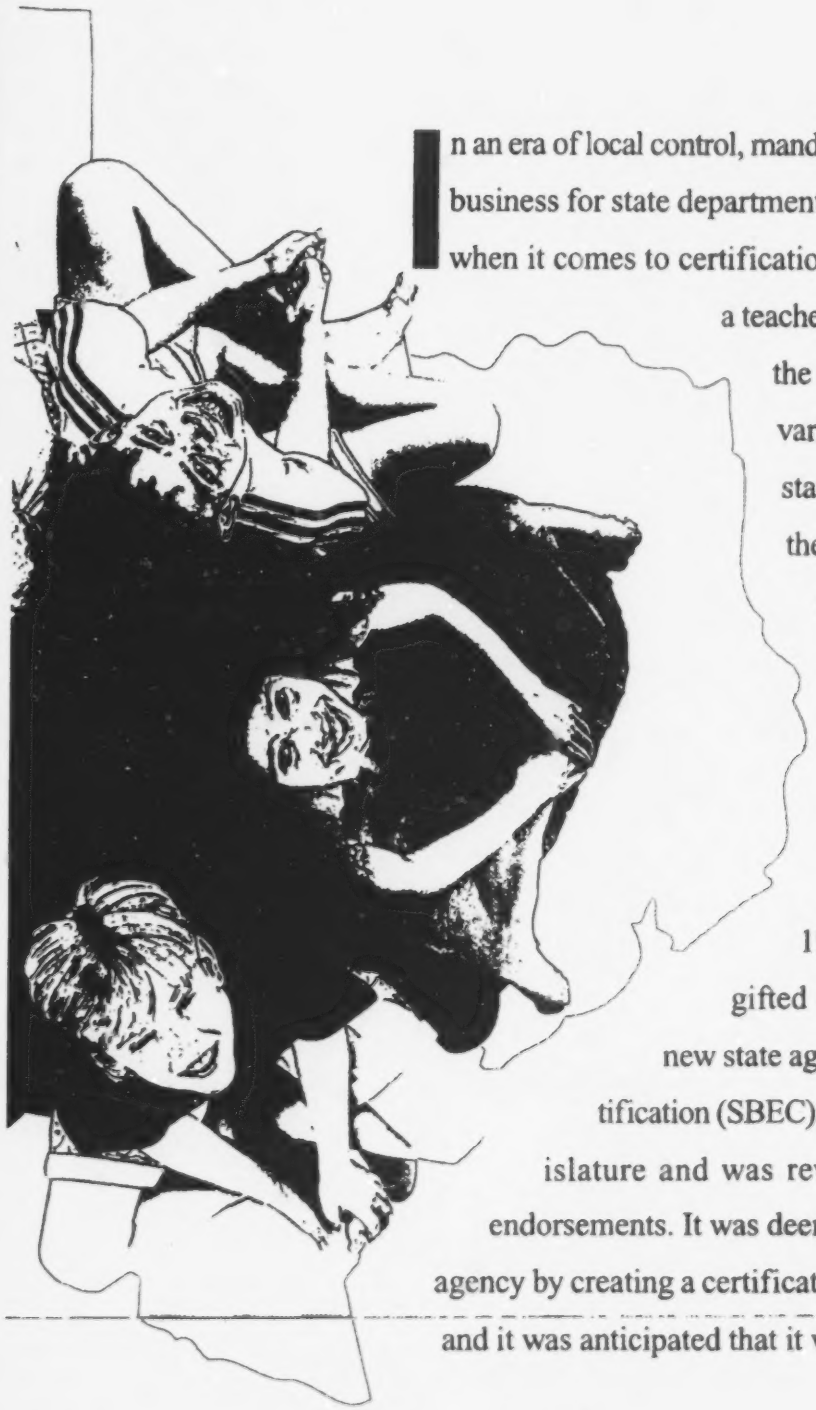

In an era of local control, mandating professional development is a risky business for state departments of education. This is particularly true when it comes to certification or endorsements that are added onto a teacher's standard teaching certificate. During the 1990's most states limited or eliminated various certifications. For example, many states including Texas moved away from their previous requirement of specific science certifications for chemistry, physics, or biology, and began granting a general science certification.

Prior to adoption of new rules for services for gifted students by the Texas State Board of Education in 1996, the possibility of a certificate in gifted education seemed highly unlikely. A new state agency, the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC), had just been created by the Texas Legislature and was reviewing all state certifications and endorsements. It was deemed inappropriate to preempt this new agency by creating a certification procedure within state board rules, and it was anticipated that it would be several years before require-

"There is a second category of training required by state rule. All who have decision-making authority over services for gifted stu

ments for new certifications were adopted. A voluntary endorsement in gifted education was already in place, but since it was not required, few teachers pursued this option. While the state board recognized the sensitivity of the situation, it was reluctant to implement a state-mandated program without professional development training requirements. A compromise enabled the state board to require some training for all educators involved in gifted education, although those requirements were minimal at best.

Texas Rules Relating to Professional Development

89.2 Professional Development (Texas Administrative Code)

School districts shall ensure that:

1. prior to assignment in the program, teachers who provide instruction and services that are a part of the program for gifted students have a minimum of 30 hours of staff development that includes nature and needs of gifted/talented students, assessing student needs, and curriculum and instruction for gifted students;
2. teachers without training required in paragraph (1) of this section who provide instruction and services that are part of the gifted/talented program must complete the 30-hour training requirement within one semester;
3. teachers who provide instruction and services that are a part of the program for gifted students receive a minimum of six hours annually of professional development in gifted education; and
4. administrators and counselors who have authority for program decisions have a minimum of six hours of professional development that includes nature and needs of gifted/talented students and program options.

Basic Requirements

The Texas rules relating to professional development for educators working with gifted students fall into two categories and reflect a balance between local control and state regulation. The first category impacts teachers who provide services for gifted students. These professionals must receive a minimum of thirty hours of training prior to providing instruction to students. Only in extenuating circumstances—a teacher vacancy occurring in the middle of a school year or immediately before the start of school—may training take place after the teacher is actually providing services that are part of the gifted program. In those cases, the 30 hours must be completed before the end of the teacher's first semester of instruction to gifted students. State rules require that training occur in three areas: nature and needs of gifted students, student assessment, and curriculum development. Although these categories are imposed by the state, local districts may select the specific workshops or training sessions that teachers will attend. In addition, there is a six-hour annual professional development requirement for teachers to continue teaching gifted students.

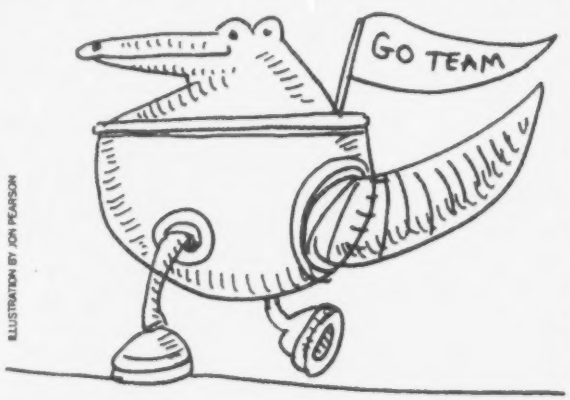

ILLUSTRATION BY JON PEARSON

As noted earlier, the current provisions reflect the compromise between state mandates and local control. Services for gifted students are mandated and do receive state funds, but typically the program is heavily supported by local district funds as well. If professional development provisions were too burdensome, all the money might be used for training leaving none for materials, curriculum development, and other program needs.

By requiring three areas of training, the state focused district attention on what it considered the most important needs related to services for gifted students. This proved to be particularly important at the secondary level. Many middle and high school teachers had no knowledge of the nature and needs of gifted students or how their districts selected students to participate in programs. For the first time they became active participants in the assessment process and new students had the opportunity to receive high level challenging instruction. Each district determined which workshops its new teachers would attend, however, and district monitoring visits often revealed that districts had not selected the most meaningful training opportunities available.

While requirements to begin teaching in a gifted program are minimal, the requirement of ongoing training fosters continued growth. Professionals often realize what training they need only after they begin to work in a specific field. The 30-hour requirement initiates a teacher's training and the ongoing requirement enables them to take advantage of professional development opportunities to meet their individual needs.

This approach is supported in the overall professional development model that the Texas Education Agency suggests districts use as part of the teacher evaluation component. This system, Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS), requires that principal and teacher meet to discuss professional growth and target professional development to support the goals chosen. It is recognized that districts may not always use this opportunity to focus on the needs of gifted students. For example, teachers may be sent to PowerPoint training— a useful technique for the general student population— rather than a session on "Developing High Standards for Services for the Gifted," which more specifically emphasizes the target population. However, over time many more teachers do engage in meaningful training programs than would have done so without this requirement.

There is a second category of training required by state rule. All administrators, including superintendents, principals, and

ninistrators, including superintendents, principals, and counselors, ts must receive at least six-hours of professional development."

counselors, who have decision-making authority over services for gifted students must receive at least six-hours of professional development. This one-time training requirement must cover the categories of nature and needs of gifted students and program options.

This component has proven to be a most important rule related to gifted education in Texas. It reflects the need for state administrators to listen carefully to the teachers in the field. For years, teachers of the gifted told us that the most disheartening part of their job was attending good training sessions where they learned things that could really improve their teaching effectiveness, but then found no support for innovation when they returned to campus. While there was much grumbling on the part of many administrators over this requirement, there also was high praise from others. For every superintendent who signed statements saying he had no authority for gifted program decisions and therefore didn't need any training, there were scores of principals, central office staff, and superintendents who confessed they had had no real idea of the needs of this special population until they went to training. These fine administrators began to support and implement changes in their local districts.

The same was true for counselors. Teachers often report that counselors can make or break a program, but this was the first required training in gifted education for this important group of administrators. As with secondary school teachers, counselors often had been told who the gifted students were with little or no input on their part. This first taste of training whetted their appetites for more, and now sessions often appear on the calendar of statewide counselor workshops. The sessions count toward the training counselors must have to keep their licenses and to fulfill the requirement of training in the nature and needs of, and program options for gifted learners.

Improving quality by partnering with the state advocacy organization (Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented)

One of the concerns that emerged early was the quality of the training received by teachers and administrators to meet the requirements. The state advocacy group, Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented (TAGT), working with the state department, began offering an Awareness Certificate in Gifted Education. This Awareness Certificate can be obtained only by attending training approved by TAGT's Education and Training Committee. Individuals or institutions wishing to have the training they offer approved must complete an application for review by this committee. Even the sessions at the annual TAGT conference are screened and not all are approved for Awareness Certificate credit. In addition, the certificate requires that the recipient complete 45 hours of approved staff development, 15 hours more than the state requirement. Not only has this improved the quality of staff development programs offered, it has provided standardization that allows districts to accept a teacher as a qualified professional even before employment begins. The TAGT Awareness Certificate is proof that a teacher has not only received the required training but has attained it from instructors with assured expertise in gifted education.

The Future

The optional university endorsement continues to receive minimal interest because of cost and limited access to approved university programs. In general, teachers pursuing the endorsement are in large metropolitan areas with access to universities. A few districts offer to cover at least part of the cost if a teacher pursues this additional endorsement.

Recently the State Board for Educator Certification formed a task force to develop state standards for teachers of the gifted and the development of an exit test. The current goal is to have the standards and exit test in place within two years, at which time the optional gifted and talented endorsement is to be replaced by a required license for all future teachers of the gifted in Texas.

After 10 years, challenges still remain for districts to provide appropriate training for their administrators, counselors, and teachers, and discussion of a required endorsement continues to be an item on the legislative agenda of TAGT. The annual six-hour staff development requirement is the issue most frequently discussed, with most discussions relating to what should and should not count. The state continues to stand firm on allowing the district to decide, in the hope that the training will be personalized to meet the needs of the individual teacher or the district's gifted program. As experts in the field of professional development have continuously advised, the key to effective staff development is follow-up. Therefore, the initial 30-hour training and the annual six-hour professional development update continue to be critical pieces in successful programming for gifted students.

The system that Texas uses for professional development in gifted and talented education is imperfect—one that was born of necessity and that survives because of law. But the result is a more well-informed group of educators and improved services delivered by better prepared teachers. The current minimal requirement has planted the seed for more substantive training in the future. We must move forward cautiously to find the right balance between high expectations for required training and what is realistically feasible to ask of districts with limited resources. This said, leaders in gifted child education in Texas all agree that the staff development component of the Texas mandate is indispensable for a meaningful and effective program of gifted education. ■

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Overcoming Bias in Gifted and Talented Referrals

Teachers must recognize specific characteristics of giftedness in order to overcome biases of gender, culture, socioeconomic status, and the fear of misidentification

BY DEL SIEGLE

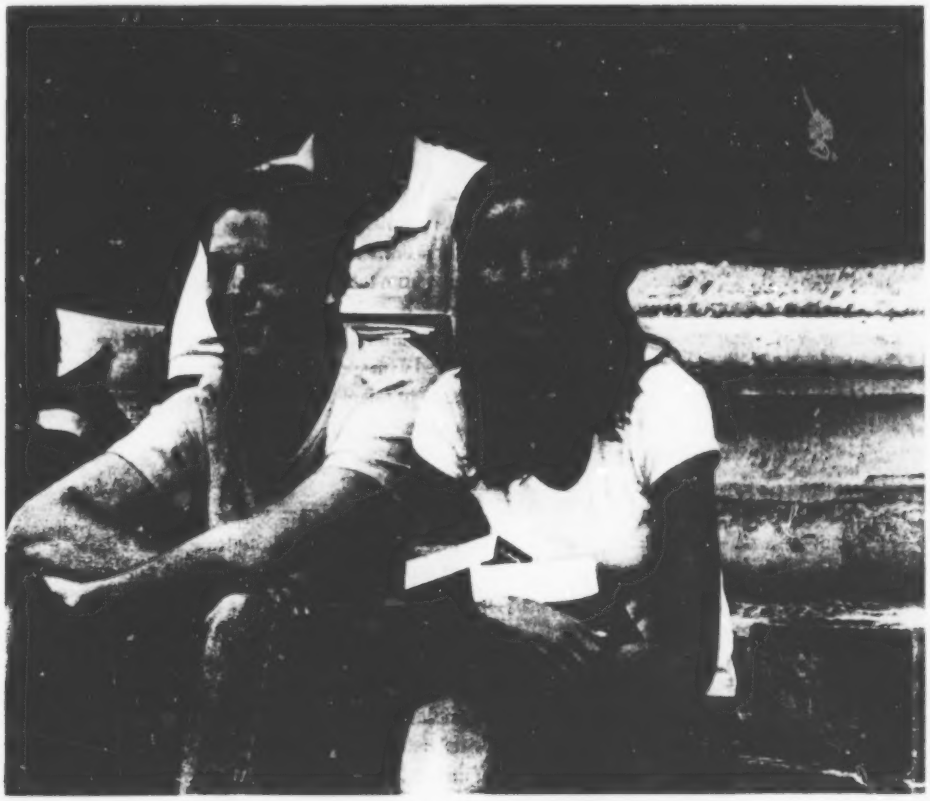
Several years ago, a friend of mine commented that classroom teachers were nominating more males than females for her district's gifted and talented program. My own experiences as a gifted and talented coordinator had not revealed any such preference. We decided to develop a series of hypothetical student profiles to assess teacher nomination bias, to explore the interaction of gender with student interests and work habits, and to discover which student characteristics might preempt or promote student nominations to gifted and talented programs (Powell & Siegle, 2000). The purpose of this article is to provide a review of that and other research on teachers' identification of gifted and talented students, and to provide classroom teachers and gifted and talented coordinators with suggestions for avoiding future identification bias.

Although standardized achievement tests and intelligence tests play a key role in the identification of gifted and talented students, many school districts include teachers' ratings of students as part of their selection criteria. Often these ratings are used to form a pool of students to be tested, and increasingly are included as part of a total identification system. Because classroom teachers interact most frequently with students, they are in a unique position to observe them in a variety of situations and under a variety of conditions. And since teacher ratings play an important role in identifying gifted students, their beliefs, stereotypes, biases, and expectations can influence whether students are included in or excluded from gifted and talented programs.

Whether or not teachers are qualified to identify gifted students has been the topic of much debate throughout the years (Gagné, 1994; Hoge & Cudmore, 1986; Pegnato & Birch, 1959; Rohrer, 1995). For the past 40 years, there has been a general perception that teachers are poor at identifying gifted and talented students. This perception stemmed from a frequently cited 1959 study by Pegnato and Birch which reported that teachers were poor at identifying students with IQ scores over 130. This perception persists despite later research findings to the contrary.

Gagné (1994) criticized the methods employed by Pegnato and Birch (1959), and after reanalyzing the data, found that "teachers do not come out worse than most other sources of information [for the identification of gifted and talented students], including some subgroups of the Otis [group intelligence test]" (p. 126). More recent research indicates that teachers are not the poor identifiers of gifted students that Pegnato and Birch reported. Hoge and Cudmore (1986) suggested there is very little empirical foundation for the negative evaluation so often associated with teacher judgment measures. Rohrer (1995) found that while teachers' preconceived notions of giftedness could preclude children with certain personality traits from consideration for gifted programs, overall, "teachers were able to recognize intellectual potential in students who were not the stereotypical White, fit, well-adjusted, high-achieving students" (p. 279).

Renzulli has been a proponent of teacher nominations as part of an identification system because teachers may recognize student strengths that standardized tests miss. The *Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students* (SRBCSS) that he developed with his colleagues in 1976, and revised in 1997, are among the most popular identification rating scales for nominating students for gifted programs. Hunsaker, Finley, and Frank (1997) reported that teachers were able to successfully identify student talents when they used the SRBCSS and other student rating scales. They found that student "nominations based on thinking abilities, general gifted behaviors, and special learning skills were related to later performance on



creativity, group skills, and language abilities" (p. 19).

While research appears to support the use of teachers' ratings of student behaviors, there is also a body of research that suggests that certain biases exist when rating students. The remainder of this article will focus on those biases and how they can be addressed. In addition, suggestions for promoting teacher awareness are included with each of the following sections.

"Efforts should also be made to help teachers understand that there isn't an all-purpose gifted child, and children do not need to exhibit gifted characteristics in all aspects of their lives."

Gender Issues

One area of concern in identifying students for gifted programs is gender bias. Research has shown that teachers spend more time interacting with male students in verbal and nonverbal ways (Mann, 1994; Oliveres & Rosenthal, 1992; Sadker & Sadker, 1993). Teachers face male students when talking (Sadker & Sadker, 1995) and give them more detailed instructions (Oliveres & Rosenthal, 1992). Not only do males receive more attention, but the quality of this attention is higher than that received by females. However, while males appear to receive more attention, there is no evidence that their overall skills are rated higher than females.

Gender bias in nomination appears to be related to specific characteristics being rated, and the bias may surprise some educators. Gagné (1993) reported that males were thought to be more able in areas requiring physical or technical skill, and females were perceived as performing better in the areas of artistic talent and socioaffective domains. Overall, boys and girls exhibit different interests and talents (Benbow, 1988; Gagné, 1993). Teachers develop stereotypes based on these expected differences. When students do not conform to these stereotypes, they draw attention to themselves. Teachers who were asked to nominate students for gifted and talented programs based on hypothetical student profiles were more likely to select profiles where the students' behavior did not match expected gender stereotypes (Powell & Siegle, 2000). For example, a voracious reader who is male will receive higher ratings than a voracious reader who is female from a teacher who believes that females love reading more than males. Similarly, a female who excels in mathematical problem solving will receive higher ratings than a similar male from teachers who believe that boys are better at math than girls. Academic skills are not the only characteristic that gender perceptions influence. Teachers are much more likely to nominate disorganized introverted boys than disorganized introverted girls (Powell & Siegle, 2000).

Bernard (1979) found that "irrespective of the sex of teacher or student, or course of study, students who are perceived as masculine in role orientation are likely to be evaluated more highly than students who are not" (p. 562). Dusek and Joseph (1983) also found that "teachers were more likely to expect high achieving students, regardless of gender, to be masculine or androgynous, and low achieving students, regardless of gender, to be feminine or undifferentiated" (p. 338). Teacher training should include opportunities to reflect on the gender stereotypes they hold and how those stereotypes can influence their selection of students.

Esoteric Nature of the Talent

The esoteric nature of students' knowledge influences educators' selections. Non-producers who were interested in airplane design and flying were more likely to be nominated than producing students who were interested in dinosaurs, a topic of interest to most elementary students (Powell & Siegle, 2000). This consideration of the nature of the student interest influenced classroom teachers more than it influenced gifted and talented specialists.

Unexpected interests, as well as unexpected gender performances, produce unexpected behaviors that attract attention. In some cases, this may increase the likelihood of students being nominated for gifted and talented programs. Tannenbaum (1986) described gifted traits as being both scarce and valued. It may be that some students are nominated for a program because they do not "fit the mold," rather than for the gifted behaviors that they

exhibit. This finding is supported by the higher ratings Powell and Siegle (2000) found for nonproductive student with an esoteric interest over the producing student with a common interest. Teachers need to be aware that "being different" is not a sufficient reason for inclusion in a gifted program.

Attention to Weaknesses Rather than Strengths

A third area of concern with teacher nominations is the tendency for classroom teachers to focus on student weaknesses rather than student strengths. Powell and Siegle (2000) found that gifted and talented specialists tended to give students higher ratings than do classroom teachers. It may be that those trained in gifted education concentrate more on students' strengths rather than their weaknesses. Programs for the gifted often focus on student strengths and interests, and the gifted and talented coordinators may be more sensitive to this. Classroom teachers, on the other hand, are often cast in a role of diagnosis and remediation and therefore may be more sensitive to student weaknesses. Perhaps the focus on weaknesses rather than strengths stems from teachers' past experiences in nominating students for remediation programs.

Teachers seldom have any reluctance in identifying students for remedial help in core subjects, or in sending them to a specialist for instruction to improve weaknesses in basic skills. Somehow, the reverse must be made clear; *the needs of gifted students are just as strong and as worthy of specialized instruction as any other special category of students* (Weber, 1999, p. 187).

Teachers require training that focuses on student talent areas. Efforts should also be made to help teachers understand that there isn't an all-purpose gifted child, and children do not need to exhibit gifted characteristics in all aspects of their lives. This awareness may also increase teachers' recognition of strengths over weaknesses.

The paradox between the exhibition of age appropriate behaviors in a young child and the display of mental capabilities beyond his years creates a disequilibrium not easily dealt with by classroom teachers who have not received training in working with gifted students (Weber, 1999, p. 185).

Fear of Misidentification

Another reason classroom teachers focus on student weaknesses over strengths is their fear of misidentifying students. Classroom teachers who express fear about labeling a child for what they think is a lifelong prediction might be helped by considering Renzulli's (1979) statement that individuals are gifted only at certain times, under certain conditions, and in certain circumstances. Therefore, teachers "are actually only being asked to recommend certain services for certain children at a certain point in time, under certain circumstances... [which] removes a great burden from the shoulders of ...[those] who are concerned that their identification amounts to a 'forever' label" (Weber, 1999, p. 188).

Teachers may also fear that they will harm students by placing them inappropriately in gifted programs. Ample research evidence documents the effectiveness of acceleration and enrichment for students. Teachers need to have access to current research to dispel their fears of doing harm to children through acceleration or enrichment.

"Culture more than race, appears to be a factor in student selection. Students from different cultures will exhibit gifts and talents differently."

Specificity of the Talent

The first step in identification should be to clearly define what is meant by gifted. Without a clear definition, those who are asked to nominate students must rely on the stereotypes they have personally developed, resulting in the inherent biases previously described. When left to their own devices, teachers tend to focus on skills associated with academic performance when nominating students to gifted programs and less on creativity, leadership, and motor skills (Guskin, Peng, & Simon, 1992; Hunsaker et al., 1997). This may be because of the perception that services for gifted programs ought to be limited to academic skills. While these perceptions are appropriate for academic-based programs, if a program is based on recognizing and developing a wide range of student talents, then checklists describing specific behaviors in the other domains should be used by teachers.

Borland (1978) showed that accuracy was improved by asking teachers for nominations based on specific characteristics, rather than global judgments. Kolo (1999) found that instruments which "explicitly and very clearly spell out the traits or characteristics to be used by nominators...were more effective than those ones in which the traits to be rated or checked are not so obvious" (p. 181). Selection committees should be specific about the skills the teacher is being asked to evaluate.

A Chinese proverb notes that when one doesn't know to which port one is sailing, no wind is favorable. The first step in identification is defining what types of students will benefit from the program and training teachers to recognize those traits. Gifts and talents come in various domains. Teachers should be provided with specific criteria which matches the area of talent that a program is designed to service.

Culture and SES

Culture, more than race, appears to be a factor in student selection. Students from different cultures will exhibit gifts and talents differently. Those who are being asked to nominate students should be aware how talent manifests itself in different cultures. For example, bringing honor to the group, rather than to oneself influences Native American students' behaviors. A teacher who is not aware of this can easily overlook talented individuals from that culture.

Recent research showed that Hispanic students who were nominated for gifted programs received ratings similar to Anglo students who were nominated; however Hispanic students who were not nominated received much lower ratings than Anglo students who were not nominated (Plata & Masten, 1998). Because perceived weaknesses limit student selection opportunities, and different groups may exhibit traits that teachers view as weaknesses, culturally diverse students are at a disadvantage.

The socioeconomic status of students also influences teacher ratings. Low SES males were seen as less attentive and low SES students overall were seen as less confident (Guskin et al., 1992). This may be a problem in small communities where teachers are well acquainted with their students' families. The adage, "The acorn doesn't fall far from the tree" can be detrimental for talented students from impoverished conditions in close-knit communities. As early as 1984, Birch warned that when the social, cultural, and personal interests of students are not considered, educators fail to recognize and react to children's individual strengths.

Opportunity to Demonstrate One's Talent

Lastly, teachers won't recognize student talent if their classroom environments don't pro-

vide opportunities for students to demonstrate their talent. This is particularly problematic for young children. "Because the emphasis for the majority of young students is on the acquisition of basic skills in academics, students who have already mastered these skills may not even receive the opportunity to demonstrate the range of their capabilities during an average class period" (Weber, 1999, p. 185).

Students may turn off in classrooms where there is limited academic challenge and intellectual stimulation. Powell and Siegle (2000) found that students who chose not to engage in classroom assignments were rated lower than students of a similar profile who did engage in classroom assignments. Such students may be classified as underachievers and end up being underidentified as well. Despite demonstrating productivity related to personal interests, these students were seldom recommended. This is unfortunate, since involvement in gifted and talented programs may provide the intellectual stimulation many of these students seek through personal interests. Baum, Renzulli, and Hébert (1995) found that students who had the opportunity to explore advanced projects related to personal interests often reversed their underachievement pattern.

Teachers also need to be aware that sending students to gifted programs does not imply that their own teaching is inadequate (Weber, 1999). They may be reluctant to nominate students if they fear that these nominations suggest that they are unable to meet the academic needs of gifted students in their classrooms, and that therefore they are failing as teachers.

The first step in solving a problem is to identify it. Coordinators of gifted programs can improve student identification by providing teachers with information on identification bias. They can also give teachers opportunities to examine their biases and stereotypical beliefs about gifted and talented students and can propose specific student identification criteria that matches the district's gifted and talented program definition. Such training will go a long way toward improving referrals for gifted and talented programs. ■

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PARENTS
as Learners and Teachers

BY SYLVIA B. RIMM

Parents and educators are partners in guiding gifted children toward self-fulfillment and in helping them contribute to society. If these partners communicate well, they are more likely to be supportive of each other. Parents should understand the educational goals of teachers, and teachers must acknowledge the perspective of parents.

Parents often feel intimidated about parenting gifted children. Faced with their children's high IQ scores, adultlike vocabulary, and exceptional wisdom or talent, some parents mistrust their ability to guide a child who is so different. Parents may worry that the children are smarter than they are and assume they must follow their children's direction instead of providing needed parental guidance. While it is true and often repeated that gifted children are children first and gifted second, it is also true that sometimes their unusual talents are so powerful and obvious that parents feel isolated and frightened about the whole parenting process.

It is wise for parents to join local, state, and national organizations for guidance and support. Schools, too, should provide training programs for parents that sensitize them to the ways gifted children are like and unlike other children. Such programs help parents gain confidence, prevent gifted children from internalizing pressure, and can enhance the communication between home and school.

Parents need opportunities to come together to learn new information and to share insights into parenting their gifted children.

Will Parents Participate in Parent Training?

Schools that hold parenting courses usually garner excellent participation and parent appreciation. Some parents may require prompting to take part; in general, however, parents of gifted children especially feel the need for support. Parenting courses improve communication between teachers and parents and also encourage achievement for gifted children.

Tried-and-True Formats

These classes can have a variety of formats. A basic or awareness-level format, held at least once during the school year, offers an evening meeting for parents to better understand the special needs of gifted children. A regionally known speaker attracts larger audiences. Advertising and communication, however, make the most difference in the size of the audience. If there is an accompanying program for the gifted children, more parents are likely to participate. Furthermore, if there is an art exhibit or brief performance by children prior to the program, more parents will be willing to leave the comfort of their homes.

In economically disadvantaged areas, it becomes even more important to attract and hold parents in order to provide their children with the support they need. Offering a light evening meal and child care for younger children can add to the likelihood of excellent attendance. A local business or industry might be willing to support such a parent-child evening

A more in-depth format that includes six to eight weekly sessions provides a good follow-up to the introductory awareness evening. One-and-a-half- to two-hour sessions, combining presentation, discussion,

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and video material, permit parents to apply what they learn to their own families and give insight into the ideal home-school partnership. Such classes can be led by teachers, counselors, or school psychologists within the school district if they have appropriate training. Ideally, attendance could be between 8 and 12 parents, and times for these meetings should vary to attract different parent audiences. Day, evening, or weekend classes may be effective for different audiences.

Attracting fathers may be more difficult; emphasize that they too are an essential part of parenting. Depending on resources, consider offering courses for fathers or single parents. The more parent involvement, the more likelihood of success for your gifted students.

The Content of Parent Training Courses

The content for a single presentation can vary, and can be based on any interesting topic about gifted children. There are also many books from which topics can be taken, including those listed in the sidebar on p. 28.

Topics such as characteristics of giftedness, emotional and social adjustment, ADHD and gifted children, underachieving gifted children, creativity and giftedness, gender issues and achievement, your school's curriculum for gifted children, or assessment of giftedness, are all appropriate.

There are several books available especially for training parents of gifted children, including *Guiding the Gifted Child* (Webb et al., 1982) and *Parenting for Achievement* (Rimm, 1994). The latter uses the accompanying books *How to Parent so Children Will Learn* (Rimm, 1996) and *Keys to Parenting the Gifted Child* (Rimm, 2001b).

In crafting a curriculum, I recommend including fundamental information found in any good parenting course along with some additional information specific to giftedness. Providing giftedness information without teaching basic parenting may lead parents to assume that certain behavioral problems—such as overempowerment, emotional intensity, and perfectionism—must be acceptable behaviors of a gifted child. Too many children have been brought to Family Achievement Clinic for help after their parents have helped generate problems for them by misguided acceptance or fostering of inappropriate behavior because the children are gifted.

I recommend elements based on the Parenting for Achievement course, which I developed specifically for fostering the partnership between parents and teachers in guiding gifted children. It has been used with great success in many school districts.

Basic Elements in a Parenting Course

Following are a number of elements that make up the core of good courses for parents of gifted children.

Characteristics of gifted children. Sensitizing parents to the range of characteristics of gifted children will help them understand their own children's similarities and differences compared to other children. Characteristics of gifted children are shaped by both genetics and environment. The praise and attention given to gifted children helps establish their identity as being gifted in particular areas and encourages them to define themselves, their motivations, and their pressures. Parents and teachers dramatically affect the characteristics that emerge; therefore, educating adults to the power they have in shaping direction and self-concept is a priority. Too often gifted children are paralyzed by their self-definition as a "brain," and they can be crippled from developing as a total person. Adults set children's expectations early; parents who are aware of this power can save their children from some terrible pitfalls of giftedness.

> **"Although there is no evidence that gifted children have more problems than others, they certainly have some different ones."**

Setting limits. There are philosophical differences as to how parents should set limits for their children, gifted or otherwise. Although there is considerable research that suggests that authoritative families—neither authoritarian nor too liberal—seem to raise the best-adjusted children, children's giftedness may mislead parents to overempower them because they seem so adultlike at times. Parents who set limits positively, as coaches, not judges, were found to be important to the success of over a thousand women (Rimm, Rimm-Kaufmann, & Rimm, 1999). Avoiding overempowerment is equally important for parents of all children, and overempowerment is less likely to occur if parents feel more confident in their parenting. A course that grants parental leadership builds confidence in the parents and security in the children.

Parents and teachers working together. Because of the many variations in family structure today, the "united front" no longer means agreement between only two parents. The parenting team may include one, two, three, or four parents, grandparents, nannies, child-care providers, day-care providers, and teachers. With so many individual differences affecting gifted children, they can easily feel pressure, avoid effort, and manipulate adults in ways that will harm their accomplishment, learning, and self-confidence. When children can manipulate adults against each other, their power may make them oppositional and defiant. Although adults don't necessarily have to agree on everything, children grow in confidence when their guiding teams agree on the main principles for raising them.

Helping parents compromise with each other at home, and having parents and teachers support each other, are crucial components of raising all children. This becomes more complicated with gifted children because school curricula may not be sufficiently challenging, and parents, in their

appropriate advocacy for their children, can become or seem oppositional to the school. Healthy advocacy requires some delicate balancing, and parenting classes give schools the opportunity to teach parents how to be positive advocates for their children without undermining the school's own authority.

Providing enrichment and acceleration. From the preschool years onward, parents must understand how to tie together what teachers and they themselves provide for their gifted children. Determining when to get professional intervention and how to find it also plays an important role in maintaining appropriate challenges in school and in life. A thorough understanding of available school programs will also help. Parents can also learn how they can volunteer to provide enrichment as adult mentors.

Social-emotional issues. Pressures, perfectionism, peer issues, emotional intensity, and underachievement are a few important awareness topics. How parents and teachers can support gifted children during during periods when they feel themselves alone is especially important in light of recent violence perpetrated by gifted individuals. Although there is no evidence that gifted children have more problems than others, they certainly have some different ones. Depending on the community, children known as "geeks" or "brains" may struggle with special peer issues. Parents need guidance to determine when these problems are within normal development and when there is pathology that requires special psychological or psychiatric help.

Role models and mentors. Parents, of course, shouldn't try to create children in their own images. But because we do know that children unconsciously copy other people in creating their own identities, it is important to realize that children are watching and copying parental behaviors and attitudes. Understanding what qualities are more likely to elicit unconscious copying is very useful.

Research from social learning theory suggests that there are three variables that make a difference in whether children identify with their parents. Once aware of these variables, parents can encourage children's identification with positive role models in their environment (Rimm, 1995). The three variables are: nurturance, or the warmth of the relationship between the child and a particular adult; similarities that children see between themselves and the adult; and power of the adult as perceived by the child.

When a parent cares a great deal about the child, the child feels a closeness that promotes the wish to be like that adult. This wish is enhanced when the child sees characteristics within him or herself that resemble those of the adult—e.g., similar hair or eye color, personality, humor, or enjoyment of similar activities.

The issue of appropriate power is the most difficult to convey. Parents who deprecate themselves or who are demeaned by their partners are not great candidates for identification, because children are likely to see them as powerless. Parents who are seen as respected by their partners, by other people in the community, or even by their children's friends, are more likely to be figures chosen for identification.

In a divorce, if a parent compares the child to the other parent with whom the first parent doesn't get along, the child is more likely to see the other parent as a role model—not exactly what the first parent wishes. Also, parents who seem dependent and powerless, and who complain about the other parent not providing support, may find their children admiring the other more powerful parent.

Parents who feel good about themselves, who are interested in their careers, and who are respected by their partners, are most likely to garner the respect and identification of their children. Although life is not kind enough for parents to feel good about themselves all the time, the better they make their own lives, the better role models they will become for their children.

Although each of these main topics for the content of parenting classes could be the subject of a single class, leaders of classes will need to be sensitive to the special interests of the particular parents in their classes. When parents are both learners and teachers, there will be flexibility in parenting classes, and gifted children will benefit. ■

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HELPFUL PARENT GUIDEBOOKS

What Kids Need to Succeed: Proven, Practical Ways to Raise Good Kids
Benson, P. L, Galbraith, J., & Espeland, J. (1998), Free Spirit Publishing

The Challenge of Raising Your Gifted Child
California Association for the Gifted. (1998)

Education of the Gifted and Talented (4th ed.)
Davis, G. A., & Rimm, S. B. (1998), Allyn & Bacon

The Gifted Kids' Survival Guide: A Teen Handbook
Galbraith, J., Delisle, J. R., & Espeland, J. (Eds.). (1996), Free Spirit Publishing.

The Gifted Kids' Survival Guide for Ages 10 & Under
Galbraith, J. (1998), Free Spirit Publishing

Parenting for Achievement
Rimm, S. B. (1994), Apple Publishing Company

Why Bright Kids Get Poor Grades—and What You Can Do About It
Rimm, S. B. (1995), Crown Publishing

How to Parent So Children Will Learn
Rimm, S. B. (1996), Crown Publishing

See Jane Win: The Rimm Report on How 1000 Girls Became Successful Women
Rimm, S. B., Rimm-Kaufman, S., & Rimm, I. (1999), Crown Publishing.

How Jane Won
Rimm, S. B., & Rimm-Kaufman, S. (2001a), Crown Publishing

Keys to Parenting the Gifted Child
Rimm, S. B. (2001b). (2nd ed.). Barrons Educational Series, Inc.

Your Gifted Child
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Specialized Counseling for Gifted and Talented Students

Neglect Or Ignorance?

BY F. RICHARD OLENCHAK

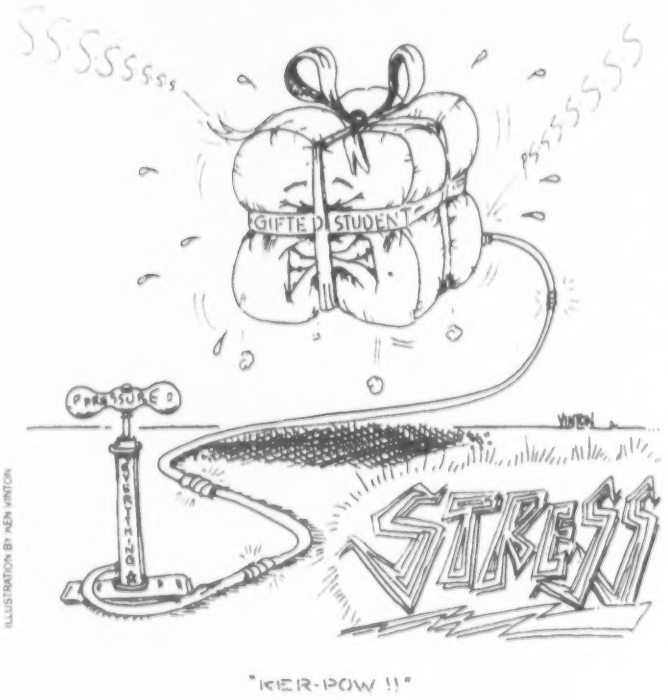

ILLUSTRATION BY KEN VINTON

"KER-POW !!"

Last September I had a call from a parent whose career assignments cause her to uproot her family every few years; she asked me about counseling for her three elementary school children, all of whom are identified as gifted. As our conversation progressed, it became clear that she was interested in counseling because each of her children was experiencing some difficulty with the family's frequent moves. I contemplated recommending that she see the school counselor or school psychologist as a first step until she detailed the behaviors her children were experiencing: night sweats and vivid nightmares, anxiety, restlessness, labile attitudes, and fading task attention and completion. When she added that these characteristics had increased with each successive relocation, it was clear that my original ideas for advice would be inadequate; I was aware that few counselors in the area were trained to work specifically with gifted and talented students and that professional development was often absent for school counselors. The caller and her children ultimately received the assistance they needed from a colleague who specializes in gifted and talented youth. As for myself, I set out to investigate the state of counseling preparation for work with gifted and talented students around the nation.

By searching the course catalogs of 25 leading universities where preparation in school counseling and counseling psychology are major enterprises, my suspicions were virtually confirmed: there is an absence of special counseling preparatory courses at both the preservice and graduate levels for work with gifted and talented students. Although such a small survey can hardly be termed conclusive, since it targeted the most renowned school counseling and counseling psychology programs, it gives cause for concern. A follow-up survey of course catalog information at 12 universities where gifted and talented education is considered to be of national prominence revealed similar results. In spite of the presence of excellent preparatory programs in the teaching of gifted and talented at each of those universities, programs for developing counselors fail to require even one course associated with gifted and talented children, let alone requiring training in their affective development. Is this phenomenon a result of neglect, or a misunderstanding of the needs of gifted and talented children?

From Then Until Now: What the Literature Tells Us

Concern for the affective development of gifted students is not new. Hollingworth (1931) suggested that young people with high intelligence are vulnerable because their abilities are so out of synchrony with other aspects of their development; however, concerted efforts toward counseling gifted youth did not appear until the 1970's (St. Clair, 1989). More recently, Delisle (1992) detailed adjustment concerns, while Silverman (1993b) implored counselors to recognize that gifted pupils have specialized affective needs because they are so far from the norm, just as do those with mental challenges at the other end of the theoretical bell curve. Presently, Cross (2001) and Coleman and Cross (2001) delineate various social and psychological features associated with giftedness and talent that demand direct attention if such students are to flourish not only as gifted pupils but as individuals in society.

We do not as yet have empirical evidence attesting to the vulnerability of gifted and talented youth, but work in progress does reinforce the notion qualitatively. Case studies continue to suggest, quite logically, that being different from one's peers prompts at least some psychosocial concerns during the developmental years. This belief caused 335 parents, school personnel, and counseling professionals to agree that gifted and talented children do have needs different from those of others their age, and as a result require differentiated counseling (Moon, 1997). The fact of human differences, particularly when related to giftedness, is not popular in most societies and is often met with hostility by the majority (Alsop, 1997). Perhaps more critically, giftedness and its haunting feeling of difference tend to cause internal struggles about identity and one's ability to balance personal needs with social

and family demands (Greenspon, 1998; Moon & Hall, 1998; Olenchak, 1999).

Much has been written about techniques to address the affective needs of gifted and talented students. Ranging from single strategies to comprehensive systems, researchers recommend that counselors and other professionals employ approaches such as bibliotherapy (Frasier & McCannon, 1981; Hébert, 1991, 1995), cinematherapy (Drews, 1964; Milne & Reis, 2000), role playing and sociodrama (Olenchak, 1991; Torrance, 1979), and imagery (Goff & Torrance, 1991).

Researchers have also developed entire models for serving the affective development of gifted and talented students. Silverman (1993b) states that "... regardless of the talent domain in which giftedness expresses itself, gifted and talented individuals share certain intellectual and personality traits... both the intellectual and the personality differences of this group must be taken into account in designing appropriate counseling programs" (p. 51). Her "Developmental Model for Counseling the Gifted" addresses intellectual and personality characteristics as foundations for intervention. She concludes that "counselors need to understand these essential facets of the gifted person and to employ them constructively in the therapeutic process" (Silverman, p. 52).

Also utilizing the characteristics associated with giftedness to determine counseling provisions, VanTassel-Baska (1998) recommends three specific types of counseling: academic program planning matched to learners' cognitive needs; life and career planning that presents atypical options; and psychosocial counseling focused on the preservation of affective differences. Though this traits-based structure somewhat parallels Silverman's, VanTassel-Baska emphasizes a confluent approach in which teachers and parents also assume responsibility for key roles in counseling. Her rationale for sharing the responsibility is that school counselors too often are confronted with large caseloads, tend to have inadequate training and support, and frequently are restricted by administrative requirements (VanTassel-Baska & Baska, 1993).

Delisle (1992) focuses on systems for individualizing counseling by recognizing that every adult in a gifted child's life is critical to self-development. He explains that giftedness imposes one set of counseling needs and each individual gifted child's personal situation demands another, and the two sets do not necessarily overlap. As a result of this complex interaction of distinct needs caused by giftedness coupled with needs unique to the individual, Delisle believes that all the adults in gifted children's lives must become actively involved in their counseling.

In contrast, Colangelo (1997) concentrates on counselors specifically. Although he readily acknowledges the importance of every adult in counseling gifted and talented youngsters, he accentuates the role of counselors as linchpins in serving the affective development of gifted students. His model aims at helping counselors assess the nature of existing parental-school interactions and determine how those interactions might be enhanced; if parents respond positively, that is a bonus.

"Efforts should also be made to help teachers understand that there isn't an all-purpose gifted child, and children do not need to exhibit gifted characteristics in all aspects of their lives."

Colangelo (1997) predicted that "counseling and psychological issues would become one of the distinguishing features in the education of gifted children" (p. 354). Indeed, from the research and the large number of publications focusing on the affective dimension of giftedness, it seems reasonable to believe that Colangelo was correct in his prediction. Yet, with so little available in the way of formalized counselor training for addressing the needs of gifted and talented students, one wonders why the inquiry from the research community has failed to translate into the establishment of counseling preparatory programs.

A Bigger Identity Problem

To those who are familiar with general education, the dearth of training programs in counseling able students should not be surprising. There remains an education-wide belief that gifted and talented students will achieve success without special services. Work by authors such as Sapon-Shevin (1987, 1994) even charge that special school accommodations for gifted students can cause "damage" to nongifted pupils. And in gifted and talented education itself, there have been significant efforts to downplay the unique dimensions of this population. Perhaps the belief is that total assimilation of gifted students into the rest of schooling will, in some way, make it more palatable to those who insist that giftedness is ipso facto elite.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is expanding its influence on nationwide educator training. While its areas of recognition include virtually all of the academic disciplines and also fields such as counseling and exceptional (special) education, there are not only no standards established in gifted and talented education, there is no mention that it is, in fact, a separate field.

Consequently, in a field not recognized as having an identity by those responsible for national teacher training programs, it is highly unlikely that counseling related to that field would receive significant regard. In spite of the research attesting to the need for gifted and talented education, and the clear evidence of the unique affective development of gifted and talented children, the fact remains that much of education continues to view able students as though they "will make it on their own." Amidst this climate, it is no wonder that gifted and talented programs wax and wane and that specialized training for personnel to support such students is difficult to find.

But They Are Still There: A Model for Professional Development of Counselors

The needs of gifted and talented students deserve accommodations just as do those of children with other types of special educational needs. In the absence of provisions in school for gifted and talented children and in the vacuum of preparatory programs for counselors to serve them, what can be done?

A professional development plan for school counselors can be created and implemented by local school districts, by consortia of districts, by regional and state educational agencies, or by local, state, or national counseling association members. Though not resulting in academic degrees, special certificates can often be arranged

through professional organizations or through state agencies that train counselors.

The Developmental Model for Professional Development of Counselors of Gifted and Talented Students (DM-PDC) is constructed on the basis of the characteristics of gifted and talented children as identified in the research literature, and on the importance of extrapolating those generic traits to individual students and to their personal circumstances. Just as counselors of gifted students often recommend a developmental approach in contrast to a remedial one, a similar approach should be taken regarding the professional growth of such counselors. A developmental model creates an environment in which school counselors are able to expand professionally, much as a developmental model for counseling gifted youth enhances their educational growth. The DM-PDC proposed below is predicated on knowledge of both affective and cognitive needs of gifted youngsters as a group, on the ways in which those needs are manifested in individual gifted students, and on a solid general foundation in counseling. Unlike other professional development models, the DM-PDC is based on specific psychosocial needs associated with giftedness.

Figure 1. FOUNDATIONS OF COUNSELING
Developmental Model for Professional Development of Counselors of Gifted and Talented Students (DM-PDC)

Stages	Examples of Components
Stage A: The Meaning of Giftedness Networking the School Community Focus Group Discussions Fact Seminars Individual Dialogues Simulations	Counselors master methods for networking the school community as a means first, for assessing how professionals, parents, and students view giftedness theoretically and in practice, and second, for addressing changes in perceptions that may need to be made to enhance accuracy and fairness.
Stage B: Feelings of Difference Bibliotherapy & Cinematherapy Diverse Talent Honor Seminars Diverse Talent Discussion Groups Role Playing & Sociodrama Teamwork & Team-Building Multicultural Appreciation	Counselors master how to apply bibliotherapy and cinematherapy specifically with gifted and talented students, as well as strategies for showing teachers how to integrate these techniques with classroom content to enhance appreciation for giftedness.
Stage C: Feelings of Inner Conflict Peer Group Discussions Personalized Counseling Journal Writing Creative Problem Solving Skills Goal-Setting Mentorships	Counselors master strategies for arranging and guiding peer group discussions not only with groups of gifted and talented students but also with groups of mixed ability students to facilitate cross-ability understanding of inner conflict.

Stage A: The Meaning of Giftedness. Using a historical timeline as a framework, it is important that counselors, like other educators, understand the nature of giftedness. And while a survey of such characteristics is useful, it is important also that counselors understand that gifted and talented people are individuals, each one unique. Thus a marriage of the traits approach, as advocated by Silverman (1993 b) and VanTassel-Baska (1998), with Delisle's (1992) personal growth perspective is appropriate.

Tracing the progression of gifted and talented definitions through history reveals the manner in which definitions have changed. It is impossible to address counseling of gifted and talented students unless professionals understand that this population includes not only those who perform commensurate with their ability, but also those who do not. It is also critical that counselors are aware that the population of able students embraces not only those who have great broad intellectual ability but also those who have significant giftedness in but a single dimension.

Ultimately, it is critical for counselors to become keenly aware of how the definition of giftedness employed in their schools is actualized. Paper definitions may or may not depict the ways people translate them into practice. Simply because schools say they support gifted and talented students does not ensure that such youngsters actually receive the appropriate cognitive and affective accommodations needed. Counselors working with gifted students must be bloodhounds as they set about tracking what is happening to each individual gifted student with regard to how the paper definition is put into practice.

Counselors must look well beyond published definitions and into specific situations. How do teachers and other adults connected with individual gifted children interpret giftedness generally and in each gifted child specifically? How does the school as a community celebrate or denigrate giftedness? This implies that professional development for counselors will include not only textbook material about the meaning of giftedness but also strategies for determining what is really happening to children with respect to how their giftedness impacts their lives.

Stage B: Feelings of Difference. The value of self is fundamental to effective human functioning, so it is essential to recognize the need to help gifted students handle their feelings of difference. Unfortunately, few programs for gifted and talented students address this matter at all (Howley, Howley, & Pendarvis, 1995; VanTassel-Baska & Baska, 1993), as giftedness is often downplayed by schools and gifted students alike. In fact, gifted students may well engage in "disidentification" (Coleman & Cross, 2001) dealing with their differences by masking them through behaviors considered not to reflect or value high ability. Berating other gifted students, "hanging out" with peers who are either not gifted or who openly criticize giftedness, becoming involved in activities for which they have marginal talent, and posing inane questions or telling jokes, are attempts to cope with feelings of difference by denying one's gifted status.

It is important that counselors understand the ways gifted and talented students either attempt disidentification or, more commonly,

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District Coordinators Utilize Advisory Council

BY PRISCILLA SHAVER

Are you having trouble funding your gifted and enrichment program? Have you been getting little support in your efforts to provide quality services for gifted and highly able students? Do your growth and improvement packages for enhancing program services rarely get approved? Then it is quite possible that you are in need of developing or strengthening your advisory council.

Oftentimes educators consider only the professionals in their building or school district when seeking program support. In fact, we can all benefit by involving both family members of our students and members of our community in helping to raise our kids properly. Just as it is important to involve parents and community members when students are at risk of failing or dropping out of school, it is also vitally important to seek this aid and participation for the benefit of our gifted and highly able learners.

A gifted and enrichment advisory council is an organized group consisting of parents, school staff, and community members who meet to ensure appropriate services for gifted and enrichment students. Although this group is not an official decision-making body, it can play a powerful role in influencing decision-makers of a school or district. This article will offer suggestions on how to organize an advisory council, what to do when one is organized, and specific actions this group can take to solicit support.

There are several steps to creating an advisory council though these these steps do not necessarily have to be done in order.

Membership. Decide who should be part of the council. Administrators, counselors, teachers, parents, and community members make up the council in my district. Determine which people within these groups have a keen interest in gifted and high ability students; this factor is essential in the choice of whom to invite. It is my experience that people seldom refuse a personal invitation. Therefore, I highly recommend that you speak to people in person or over the phone to invite them to serve as a member of the council.

Meeting Logistics. Decide on a time and place to hold advisory council meetings. After your first meeting, the group may decide to change the meeting place and time. There is no magical place or day or time. Each year it may be different depending on space availability, needs, and convenience of the group.

Communication. Send a letter or post card to each member as a reminder for each meeting.

Agendas. Prepare an agenda for the first meeting. In doing this, it is helpful to have the assistance of two or three members of the council whom you view as prospective leaders for the year's work. This procedure is helpful not only for planning and facilitating this and future meetings, but more importantly, it shifts the focus to the group rather than the coordinator or other school personnel.

A sample agenda for the first meeting

- Welcome and introductions
- Council purposes
- Topics of interest and committees for the year
- Future meeting dates, times, and location
- Election of officers

Officers. The people you choose to serve on the leadership team may very likely become the officers of this year's council. Officers may include: president, president-elect, secretary, and treasurer. In our council the treasurer's job is simply to collect money for refreshments. There are no dues! The contribution of money to the refreshment fund is a voluntary donation and may not be necessary if a budget already allows for such purchases. The role of a president is to work with the coordinator to plan and facilitate the meetings. The president-elect is the following year's president. The secretary is responsible for writing and reporting the minutes of each meeting.

Council responsibilities: The responsibility of each council member is to attend meetings, to participate on a council committee, to serve as a liaison between campus and district, and if needed, to help recruit new council members. Your first meeting may include the development of a mission statement and council goals. For example, the mission may be to to address current issues and concerns facing the gifted and high-ability students. The goals may seek to do the following:

- Heighten public awareness of the needs and concerns facing students with exceptional abilities
- Work to ensure that gifted and enrichment programs are in line with the district's mission, standards, and goals
- Offer support and assistance to the district's gifted and enrichment programs
- Become aware of local, state, and national trends and politics impacting such programs
- Work to benefit all high-ability and gifted learners.

Committees. Since the list above is comprehensive, it may be helpful to divide the group into committees to reach the goals and objectives set. We have created four committees: public relations, program development, parent and school support, and state and local community liaisons.

It has been my experience that people who serve on a school or district level council or committee, wish to see the "fruit of their labor" within a short timeline. One member explained that serving on the council was her "extracurricular" activity in life. She is a medical doctor and is extremely busy. Needless to say, she carefully chooses where to spend her "free time." If individuals are not engaged in specific projects or products, membership in the council and attendance at meetings are poor.

Committee work is a great way to involve all members in areas of their strength or interest. Each committee selects a leader whose job it is to help the group meet its goals for the year. For example, the public relations committee may write brief articles for the school or local community paper on various topics relating to parenting bright youngsters, homework hints, etc. The school support committee may wish to work on projects related to the school gifted and enrichment activities. One project could be to develop a resource bank of community members, which can be called on to serve as guest speakers, or to find places of business

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or other objectives for student field trips. The state and local liaison committee may focus on state policy regarding credit by examination, funding for gifted programs, etc. Letter writing campaigns can have a positive result in making politicians aware of the needs and desires of their constituents. This proactive approach ensures that the needs of our high ability and gifted students are seriously considered by decision-making bodies at all levels. The program development committee is the heart of this council. This committee assists in conducting program evaluations to determine strengths and weaknesses. Results can take the form of formal district requests for additional staff and funding for the purpose of program improvements or growth.

Parent education. You may wish to spend the first twenty minutes of each meeting with a guest speaker on a topic chosen by the council. Possible speakers include district personnel, community members, university professors, and parents. If members come to hear the guest speaker, the odds are that they will stay for the rest of the meeting and participate in their committee groups.

Another idea is to conduct a book or articles study with council members on topics related to giftedness, such as creativity, underachievement, or perfectionism. Once a topic has been chosen, copies of the articles or book must be made available to those members choosing to participate. If using a book, divide it into readable amounts for specific discussions so that it can be finished within a designated time. Members can then read on their own time and enter their thoughts in a notebook or some type of paper collection. When members meet, allow time for them to discuss what was read with the group and to share reflections from their journals.

Recommendations to the superintendent. Each year our council submits a letter of recommendation to the district's superintendent of instruction. A copy of this letter is presented along with a request to share the letter with the district's decision-making team. The letter and presentation occur sometime during the period from February to May, as this is the time when decisions are made on funding issues for the following school year.

The council's president and president-elect are usually the best people to make the presentation to the decision-making team. The coordinator should attend in order to respond to any questions or concerns, but is present primarily to support rather than lead this presentation.

School politics. A vital task of the gifted education coordinator is to encourage the district and the council to work together successfully. Of course, it would be nice if politics did not exist in school business, but it does. Therefore it behooves the coordinator to handle things carefully. If members of the council come across in a critical or demanding manner, it may work against them. It is important that council members understand that they can't make a positive influence on those they offend. There is wisdom in knowing when and how to communicate the requests of the council.

The coordinator is the key person to ensure that district protocol is followed when submitting the council's recommendations. It is also important that the coordinator prepare the district's superintendent of instruction or immediate supervisor with information about the recommendations before the letter is submitted. This "head's up" is a friendly way of preparing district administrators for the council's presentation. Nobody likes to be caught off-guard and discussing the contents of the letter of recommendation prior to the actual presentation is a courtesy gesture which often yields positive results.

The coordinator is the liaison between the council and district officials. However, it is helpful for the coordinator's administrative superiors to recognize that members of the council are free to go the school board if they feel that they are not receiving appropriate attention or support. A reminder of this truth from the coordinator to administrators may be especially needed if a potential uproar is brewing among council members. A positive way to preempt such a complaint going to the board is to invite a member of the district's upper administration—such as the superintendent of instruction or the coordinator's supervisor— to the next council meeting to discuss the issues of concern. This technique may provide an opportunity to resolve the matter with a minimum of unpleasantness or conflict.

It may be helpful to remind council members that district officials may differ from them as regards relevant policies because they have wider concerns than those of the council. Therefore, it is important that council members remember that they may not get all that they request. The goal is to have the council continue to work with school personnel and to have school personnel appreciate the efforts and commitments of council members even when all objectives have not yet been attained. In fact, I have made our school district administrators honorary members of the council, and keep them informed of upcoming meetings and agendas. This gesture reinforces the concept that everyone can and should be involved in the process of caring and working together to serve our gifted and high ability students appropriately.

As you can tell, the role of an advisory council is very important. It may be easy for an administration to turn down requests made by the gifted education coordinator, but it is much more difficult to say no to an organized group of vocal yet positive parents and community members who believe they are working with the district to ensure a quality education for all students. Every school system has a mission statement that specifies that all students are important, and that all students should be engaged in academic challenge. Yet only minimal attention is usually given to the needs of the gifted and highly able. An advisory council can be a major force for ensuring that these students are not overlooked. ■

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School Administrators Are Key to High Quality Programs

BY CAROLYN R. COOPER

School administrators have been plagued for decades with less-than-complete information about serving gifted and talented students. Neither the purposes for providing special services to this population nor how to do so has been explained in simple terms. We do know, however, that services for gifted and talented students are seldom actually integrated into the total school curriculum (Cooper, 1995), and as isolated add-ons, they are often suspect with staff members who receive no communication as to what these services are designed to achieve. To shed some light on what bright students (high-end learners) really should be doing in school, this article describes briefly the five key features administrators must understand about this topic and provides proven, practical tips on implementing them, as well.

Before we proceed to the "how to" of providing high-quality services for our advanced students, let's define both "high-end learners" and "talent development." Students who successfully engage in rigorous educational pursuits at levels significantly beyond that of their age-mates are high-end learners. They may be participating in one or several services beneath the high-end learning canopy, examples of which are gifted education, dual enrollment (in high school and college simultaneously), Advanced Placement (AP) courses, and others.

"Talent development" brings together several types of learning experiences for students with potential or demonstrated talent. This concept acknowledges that individuals possess different types of talents and need planned purposeful opportunities to develop them on the same continuum as professionals with those same talents use to progress from the novice stage of development to the expert stage.

> What educators and psychologists recognize as giftedness in children is really *potential* giftedness, which denotes *promise* rather than fulfillment and *probabilities* rather than certainties about future accomplishments. How high these probabilities are in any given case depends on the match between a child's budding talents and the kinds of nurturance provided. (Passow, 1985, p. 24; emphasis added)

The responsibility for determining the types of learning opportunities needed by students with promise rests with educational leaders. Passow defined giftedness as "the potential for becoming either an outstanding producer or performer, not just a consumer, spectator, or amateur appreciator of ideas," (p. 25) the action-oriented approach that today is known as talent development.

Keys To High Quality

A program of high-quality services for high-end learners has five key features (Renzulli, Callahan, & Archambault, 1978), as follows:

- Philosophy: A solid foundation, or rationale
- Identification of Talents: A procedure for finding students whose talents require special services
- Curriculum: A defensible curriculum to nurture student talents
- Teachers: Trained talent development specialists and mentors
- Organization, Operation, and Accountability: An efficient, economical, and effective plan for serving students

Important points about each should help as you consider the issue of serving your bright, talented students appropriately.

Philosophy

What does your staff believe about bright individuals in general? You cannot assume you know where each staff member stands on this crucial issue of program development. Yet a basic under-standing of it must be firmly in place before any discussion can take place about which services will be provided for your advanced learners. Biases must emerge and be recognized. Only after a frank and open discussion about the advanced-level service needs of bright students can you develop the appropriate opportunities.

What does your staff believe bright people should do in society? This step of the philosophy discussion defines the intended outcomes for students receiving advanced-level services. Does your staff believe bright people should boast about their outstanding abilities? Contribute positively to society? Not do anything special as citizens?

Finally, what should your high-end learners do with their talents? Should they do extra work in and out of class? Develop their artistic and academic talents as fully as possible to become creative producers? Do more of the same assigned work as others do? This question focuses the work ahead to develop appropriate services for your high-end learners. Keep in mind the old saying, "If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there." Then consider what political price you're willing to pay for not planning accordingly.

Identification of Talents

Share with your staff Passow's definition of potential giftedness, "which denotes promise rather than fulfillment and probabilities rather than certainties about future accomplishment," and emphasize that, collectively, you're looking for potential giftedness and promise, which may take some of your teachers aback temporarily. Many believe giftedness must be present already in the students we select to receive high-end learning services. Not so! Their budding talent is unfolding, and our job as educators is to foster that development continuously through appropriate learning opportunities and guidance.

To find students with talents, form a schoolwide identification team (Cooper, 1995) of three or four classroom teachers, one specialist who knows virtually every student in the school (art, P.E., librarian), a delegate from the administration, and the talent development specialist. This team reviews student data inclusively, incorporating all available evidence that will represent a student's talents in a positive light. Multiple criteria must be used, therefore, and used honestly. Frequently a school's identification team considers the student's IQ score first, then terminates the review process if members don't think the score is high enough to warrant advanced-level services. This is arrogant, myopic, and a bastardization of the multiple criteria function. Further, this practice is blatantly dishonest, relying on scores to deny students opportunities to develop the talents for which they show promise. Identification is not a golf game; human performance cannot be reduced to a single score!

In using multiple criteria, explain to the identification team that it must not apply

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the same criteria to every student reviewed. Talents differ from student to student, so data sources must also differ; hence a large body of evidence must be collected from which to draw. In reviewing data on a high-ability child with a learning disability, for instance, the identification team will find different strengths from those of a non-disabled child of high ability. The LD youngster is probably a reluctant reader in school, so his language arts grades should not be included in the team's discussion of his abilities. The body of evidence must be large enough to hold its own without every criterion being met. This is not a process of comparing students with each other but of finding students with promising talent who need specially-designed services to develop that talent appropriately. One that does less, in my opinion, is evidence of educational negligence (Cooper, 2000).

Knowledgeable administrators must ensure that the procedure for finding students with talent is valid and equitable. Remember: find students' strengths (talents), and don't be misled by what they cannot do. We must not allow their talents to die!

Curriculum: Meeting the "Match" Criterion

To help students develop their talents, we must design a continuum of services to offer as needed. Since no two students come to us with identical talents or needs, a defensible curriculum for bright and talented students must offer a range of services broad enough to accommodate all students as their talents emerge. Initially this sounds impossible, but it's easier than it appears.

While a few students' extraordinary performance in math may require radical acceleration, for example, several other advanced-level students may simply need their math curriculum compacted for a while (Renzulli & Reis, 1985), thereby excusing them from repeating content they have already mastered. This service buys students time to pursue in great depth the topics of their respective interests, opportunities that occur too rarely in schools. The work they produce in this time is highly advanced, rigorous, and thoroughly engaging

The continuum of services may also offer mentoring. For some students, working with a mentor in their field of mutual interest may be precisely the match needed for the student's budding talent to develop appropriately. Other students may require targeted skill instruction on how to conduct high-level research, analyze data they've collected, or bind a book they've written. And some may need to work with peers, learning to cope emotionally with being more able than some of their friends. An appropriate continuum offers multiple services.

Defensible curriculum to foster talent development embraces the following principles:

- There is no "gifted" curriculum. It's human behavior that's gifted—with the right stimulus.
- How a student responds to a stimulus—what he or she does—is what denotes gifted behavior.
- The curriculum bridges intended student outcomes and a student's potential to achieve them.
- Services transform student potential into production.
- Curricular services advance the student from the novice stage toward becoming experts in their talent areas.
- Four curriculum components differ significantly from the general curriculum: knowledge, the student as learner, the teacher, and creativity.
- The curriculum must be adjusted for depth, complexity, and pace according to a student's ability to learn at an advanced level.
- Learning experiences for high-end learners acknowledge their multiple intelligences, learning styles, and their need to be firsthand inquirers.

To accommodate the differences in advanced-level students remains our challenge, requiring rational decision-making, based on a body of evidence documenting a student's strengths, and purposeful planning. Services that don't meet Passow's match criterion I call "grab bag activities," which I find both fraudulent and actionable.

What should services actually do for students? Bright students need three types of planned purposeful learning experiences. First, they all need to explore their worlds as widely as possible to identify topics, issues, or problems they would like to pursue in depth. Second, they need to learn process skills in creative thinking: learning-how-to-learn; advanced research; technology; and oral, written, and visual communication. They will need these skills as they investigate their chosen topics.

The third type of learning is the essence of talent development: creative production. Of the possible intended outcomes examined in our earlier discussion of philosophy, it offers the widest range of services for appropriate talent development. With this focus, students learn to contribute new knowledge to their fields of interest in a genuine real-world way.

These three types of learning experiences comprise the Enrichment Triad Model (Renzulli, 1977), the curricular approach to talent development I find most defensible. Students research a real-world issue or topic of deep concern to them personally. (Yes, this means investigations of several topics are underway simultaneously.) This research is intense—more difficult than most students could or would care to pursue, requires the use of primary resources seldom found in school libraries, consumes the student's attention nearly every waking hour; and the gifted student absolutely loves pursuing the topic just as the practicing professional does! Students, parents, and school personnel clearly understand why particular services have been selected for this student, and how they are matching talent development needs.

Different Teacher Behavior Too

Students selecting topics of their own interest to investigate require different types of teaching also. For instance, Zak, a bright first-grader, decides to research the Loch Ness monster to answer a technical question that greatly interests him. The fact that the topic is not in the Grade One Science Curriculum is immaterial, as is the source of this interest (Renzulli, 1978; Gardner, 1995).

For high-end learners like Zak, most of the standard curriculum as prescribed by guides and textbooks and presented to students in a didactic manner is inappropriate. Teachers lecture; students consume the information. As choices are few, learning is relatively sterile. Teachers of high-end learners must abandon this rigidity and see these students as firsthand inquirers—investigators fueled by their passion to become experts on their topics of personal concern. These students are aiming to be creative producers—contributors to their fields of interest. Their thirst for knowledge is insatiable, and teachers must honor their commitment to burrowing into their topic as professionals do.

The successful teacher of bright and talented students must first ask the questions asked by investigative researchers within particular fields of knowledge (Renzulli, 1983). This is one of the reasons why teachers who work with high-end students of any age must be specially trained in the pedagogy

and practice of gifted education. These teachers are specialists.

After helping students narrow their research questions, these specialists alternately play the roles of facilitator, instructor, and manager of the three kinds of learning experiences found in the Enrichment Triad Model mentioned earlier. As facilitator, the talent development specialist identifies students' individual interests through an interest inventory, and then invites appropriate experts to share their knowledge with youngsters wishing to meet with them.

The instructor role is more traditional: the talent development specialist teaches students to apply specific process skills required for creative production. Zak's teacher, for example, taught him how to borrow primary sources of authoritative information on the Loch Ness monster from university and public library collections; his elementary school library was limited to books containing information he already knew

Zak also learned decision-making skills from the specialist. Like all researchers consumed by a topic, he needed to learn when to stop seeking more information about his subject and begin analyzing his data. In her instructor role, his talent development specialist taught him how to graph his data and test his hypotheses about the validity of each theory he'd encountered in his research. She also referred him to a math teacher for help in understanding the statistics he'd found.

You may be asking, "Why aren't these two types of enrichment experiences appropriate for all students?" They are. Types I and II enrichment are on the continuum of services for high-end learners also, because they teach essential skills that bright, talented youngsters apply—in a significantly different way from how other students use them—in their advancement from novice to expert.

The most professionally stimulating role the talent development specialist performs is as manager of a student's investigation. This demanding role includes asking tough questions that help students actively discover knowledge instead of consuming it passively from a didactic presentation. Also, since the specialist yields to students' expertise on their respective topics, she is not offended by a youngster saying he doesn't need her close supervision at that particular time. Instead, she moves along to check on other students' progress or switches to her instructor role and teaches a small group of students a certain process skill they all need to continue their work. In Type III learning, the student is the content expert; the specialist is the student's manager and methodological assistant.

The talent development specialist possesses an extraordinary mix of natural teaching ability: experience in teaching bright, talented students, indefatigable energy, and an unshakable belief that students of all ages can impact their world positively. This specialist must believe gifted behavior can be produced in certain people, at certain times, and under certain circumstances (Renzulli, 1978) and be sufficiently competent to help high-end learners combine their talent, task commitment, and creativity to produce gifted behavior in their area of interest.

Organizing and Operating Accountable Services

This "nuts 'n' bolts" section looks at administrative leadership and staff development; budget; space and facilities; student progress assessment and evaluation of services; and communication and public relations. Recognition of these factors has grown out of my long experience as a gifted and talented education administrator.

Administrative leadership and staff development. We administrators know educational leadership is more than support. One principal I know collects Civil War memorabilia as a hobby and eats lunch in his office once a week with a fourth-grade boy likewise interested in the Civil War. This mentoring has paid off handsomely; the youngster, who, until working with an adult as passionate as he is about the topic of their mutual interest, had not been performing anywhere near his potential; now he feels validated and is producing impressively in every class!

All teachers working with bright talented students of any age must receive "basic training" in working with this population, regardless of the number of years they have been in the classroom! Teachers are not born knowing how to work effectively with this type of exceptional student, and osmosis doesn't work well either! A fundamental responsibility of school administrators is to arrange for training that will best accommodate each teacher to be trained in the manner he or she learns best.

Teachers need immediate feedback and constructive criticism from peers already trained in gifted education so they can become stronger in each of the three roles required of them. Thus, administrators must make sure each school has a multi-grade-level cadre of teachers trained in current gifted and talented education research and methods. This responsibility should be negotiated into their contract or otherwise compensated as an extra duty since it requires observing individual teachers, videotaping for conference purposes, planning, teaching, and following up with each teacher to ensure mastery of the skills taught.

Another leadership responsibility is that of adjusting schedules so that students already advanced in science, for example, are in advanced-level science classes with other students similarly advanced. We often group by math ability, but we aren't as savvy when it comes to other areas. Students bring talents to school in many disciplines—not just math or reading!

Bright students learn best when interacting with other bright students. They stimulate each other's capabilities, be they intellectual, kinesthetic, or artistic. We have recognized this fact in athletics for a century or more: Mark McGuire and Sammy Sosa, for example, didn't get to be baseball stars from playing with inferior athletes. Florence Joyner-Kersey didn't climb to the top of her running game by competing with neophyte "wannabe's."

The principal must create the setting that nurtures gifted behavior—advanced level grouping of students in their areas of strength. Counselors or assistant principals who develop the schedule will tell you it won't work, but it can. We must begin placing more importance on accommodating students' learning needs than on creating the airtight schedule. Currently many secondary schools place the proverbial cart before the horse. The schedule is created first; next kids are stuffed into its slots without regard for the strengths that need serious challenging. Then we all stand around, shaking our heads as we wonder why our bright kids are bored and not producing anywhere near their potential!

Another example of strong administrative leadership is requiring teachers to compact curriculum and then making it happen. Mentioned earlier, compacting is a simple three-step process of (1) pre-assessment, (2) crediting what the youngster already knows and excusing him or her from repeating it while teaching only weak or missing concepts and skills ; and (3) in the time "bought" from eliminating needless repetition of previously-learned material, substituting the opportunity for advanced-level, rigorous pursuit of a topic or issue of deep personal concern to that particular student. Research

on a real-world issue of genuine concern to a student is a more authentic, more productive use of that student's time than sitting through another presentation of content already mastered. But the key here is the principal. You must insist that teachers compact curriculum for bright students needing time to pursue their individual interests productively. Phasing in this requirement over a three-year period has been found to be successful.

Compacting their curriculum permitted some students I know to study intensively the history of their school, a topic that deeply interested them. The multifaceted product they created included a video depicting the school's history, a fashion show featuring student and teacher attire throughout the school's existence, and a collection of letters former students sent as living memories of their school. Personal research of this magnitude seldom occurs without buying time for it by compacting the standard curriculum.

Budget. Principals need to create a talent development line item in their annual budgets. This strengthens staff ownership by "legitimizing" talent development, making it visible to all stakeholders. Budgets for talent development need to support the achievement of learner outcomes. Creative production, for example, requires minimal expenditures for Type I enrichment as presenters often donate their time. Some funds are needed for Type II how-to books, advanced-level reference materials, and nonprint data sources, many of which local businesses will donate. And your parent support group or PTA may contribute most of your Type III supplies such as computer software, blank videos, data-collecting equipment, scientific supplies, film, batteries, and small motors for robots and other mechanized products that students create. The school's financial outlay can be minimal.

Space and facilities. Here is a tip that seems trivial but has enormous political payoff: designate the room where talent development services are provided as the "Creative Production Lab." Cutesy names for this space belie the rigor and seriousness of purpose pursued there. "Wiggle Worms" or "Kettle's Kittens" just won't cut it with the rest of your staff! They're ridiculous to begin with, and they invite sniping: "We're just a plain old 'Grade 3 room,' but the smart kids go to the 'Wiggle Worms' room." Neither you nor your high-end learners need this kind of tension. And, for goodness sake, don't let staff call the place "the gifted room." Does it have a gifted refrigerator? The "Creative Production Lab" conveys the message that serious work is being done there.

Student progress assessment and evaluation of services. To what degree are high-end learners receiving services that match their budding talents? How do you know? How confident are you with the quality of data from your stakeholders? Evaluation is nothing if it isn't used to guide decision-making as a result (Callahan, 1995). Do you have sufficient data to make informed decisions about the structure of services you're offering your bright, talented youngsters as well as about the quality of products the students are creating? If creative production is your intended learner outcome, why not ask some high-end learners to show you their management plans when you next visit the Creative Production Lab? Strong administrative leadership and evaluation can work together here.

Communication and public relations. A common complaint from classroom teachers is not knowing which services their high-end students are receiving from the talent development specialist or how the students are faring. Teachers need thorough knowledge of these services so they can converse about their students' participation with parents, guidance counselors, and, at the secondary level, readers of college applications. The talent development specialist should send classroom teachers monthly updates—a half-sheet of paper is most effective—on their students' work in the Creative Production Lab. Principals too need to regularly request each client group's assessment of the talent development program. How informed do parents feel about the services their children are receiving to match their talents? How valuable do students themselves believe these services are, and what do they think should be improved? We need to communicate with them more often than merely at budget time if we want their continued support.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article has been to give fellow administrators practical advice about serving gifted and talented students, or high-end learners. Five key features that provide the structure and quality of services appropriate for these youngsters have each been described briefly with the intent of helping you make more informed decisions. Ultimately, students should achieve more dramatic results when the correct match is made between their budding talent and the type of nurturance your school provides for them.

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NRC/GT: Professional Development—Not an Event

By E. JEAN GUBBINS

"Reforms don't spread in places where teachers do not have the capacity to implement them."

Linda Darling-Hammond, AERA (1998)

What does professional development mean to you? Is it a periodic calendar event? Is it based on your school district's needs? Is it a time to discuss critical issues related to school district priorities? Is it mandatory attendance at a workshop? Are professional development opportunities self-initiated? To what extent have you benefited from professional development opportunities?

How would you answer the questions above? Do you think that your answers would be similar to those of other staff members? Why or why not? Try to gather some informal data by asking your colleagues about their views of professional development. Developing a working understanding of how professional development is viewed by staff members is a critical step in creating an effective plan tailored to your school needs, the needs of each staff member, and the needs of students as well as their parents.

Several years ago, we designed a survey of professional development practices in gifted education. We thought long and hard about the type of information that we wanted to know. We conducted a thorough review of the literature, attended conferences, convened groups of professionals with various prior experiences, and drafted potential items. We wanted to know the extent to which professional development was really tied to the overall visions of school districts. Some of the resulting data from the survey were highlighted in an earlier newsletter (Westberg et al., 1998). Looking back on the data and the outcomes from several studies over the last 10 years of The National Research Center of the Gifted and Talented (NRC/GT) led to a synthesis of professional development principles. Over and over, one word captured the essence of the principles: *CHANGE*. Change is certainly difficult; it is a process. We may be acutely aware of the need to restructure a curriculum unit, develop challenging opportunities for students to demonstrate their mathematics or science skills, or address students' affective needs. Of course, the level of change required to respond to any of these identified needs would vary by person. Most likely, a quick fix would not be appropriate for any plan to change one's curriculum, instructional style, or classroom climate. Far too many times, a mediocre plan is created just to do something different. We really do not know if the plan will result in improvement or the desired change. We may just want to try something without really analyzing the best way to approach an articulated plan that is responsive to the identified needs at the school, grade, or personal level. We do not always attend to the context in which the change must take place.

The following principles [see page 39] consider the person, as well as the environment, the process, and the end product (e.g., changes in behavior, knowledge base, and instructional approaches). Take a moment and review the 16 principles that emerged from our research. We are sure that you will soon recognize that many of these principles are also reflective of literature beyond the field of gifted and talented education. Go ahead and place a check under "agree" or "disagree" next to each of the following NRC/GT research-based principles.

Count the number of checks you have under the heading of "agree." Did you agree with more than 10 principles of professional development? What were your personal professional development experiences that seemed to result in similar principles? Did you recall your early or current involvement in professional development opportunities?

Professional development has many definitions. There are also multiple terms used in textbooks, journals, and newsletters, such as staff development or inservice. Obviously, the preferred term or phrase is a personal choice, as long as people understand the definition. In our survey of professional development practices, we wanted to make sure that one definition guided the responses. We crafted several definitions and finally wordsmithed one that reflected our views:

> *Professional development is a planned program of learning opportunities to improve the performance of the administrative and instructional staff.* (NRC/GT, 1996)

I, too, reviewed the list of 16 principles of professional development in gifted and talented education and checked the appropriate boxes as I reflected on my experiences as an educator for over three decades. I recalled several early experiences with formal and informal approaches. Mandatory attendance at a presentation on a topic chosen by administrators was not always well received.

Sometimes people, myself included, assumed the role of reluctant learners or disinterested attendees. The presentation topic may have been selected by someone's identified need, but those of us who were not engaged in the topic may not have recognized or even agreed with the focus. Clock-watching was a popular habit. I empathized with presenters who were clearly passionate an very knowledgeable about their topics. Many of them learned to read their audiences and to make adjustments in their pre-planned presentations. Obviously, this was not always an easy task. But this is what we ask of ourselves as we work with young people everyday. Shouldn't we also be able to adopt this same professional stance with adults?

At times, reluctant attendees connected with topics. You could see the changes in participants: body language, level of focus, engagement in questions and answers, or level of participation in hands-on activities. Successful professional development experiences are not a given. Missing the mark is a reality. However, if people are encouraged to share their ideas for the types, styles, or topics of professional development opportunities, the potential for experimenting with suggested strategies and practices will most likely increase.

Designing formal professional development opportunities in response to identified needs is not difficult. One approach would be to ask teachers and administrators to list

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Do you agree with the NRC/GT research-based principles?

Agree	Disagree		
☐	☐	1.	Professional development requires a personal and professional commitment to make a change in existing strategies and practices.
☐	☐	2.	Professional development opportunities have to be in response to an identified need: school level, grade level, small group, or individual.
☐	☐	3.	Professional development must be multi-faceted and responsive to varied learning styles.
☐	☐	4.	Professional development needs to go beyond knowledge acquisition; knowledge and experiences must be applied.
☐	☐	5.	Professional development may require mentor/protégé experiences.
☐	☐	6.	Professional development may be more effective with opportunities to observe master teachers in similar roles, engage in collegial coaching, and demonstrate practices.
☐	☐	7.	Professional development requires time for reflection (e.g., How does this new strategy or practice add to my repertoire? Should this new strategy or practice replace a former one?).
☐	☐	8.	Professional development needs to have an impact on students, teachers, curriculum, school policies, or school procedures.
☐	☐	9.	Professional development needs to be valued.
☐	☐	10.	Professional development requires a desire to learn. Lifelong learners want and need opportunities for continual growth.
☐	☐	11.	Professional development requires a "personal growth plan" (e.g., What do I want to accomplish? What job will I seek? What skills do I need? How will new skills make a difference in the school or community? How will students benefit?).
☐	☐	12.	Professional development requires prolonged time, practice, feedback, and reflection.
☐	☐	13.	Professional development needs to be differentiated (e.g., What do I know? What do I need to know? How will I seek opportunities to learn? How will I share the experiences with others?).
☐	☐	14.	Professional development plans should reflect creative problem solving guidelines (e.g., find the problem, identify the problem, and seek sources to resolve or redefine the problem).
☐	☐	15.	Professional development requires administrative and collegial support and a willingness to experience failure.
☐	☐	16.	Professional development requires the collection, analysis, and application of school-level and district-level data to make informed decisions.

the outstanding achievements of the school. Then, ask them to list areas of improvement. Review the lists, check for common topics, and summarize the input. Return the lists for additional input by asking staff members to select their first priority for their school. What needs are identified most often? Share the summary of needs with staff members and discuss possible approaches to addressing identified needs. Involving faculty at each phase of planning professional development opportunities will certainly require a little more time, but the effort will be worthwhile.

Remember that professional development is not an event. It is an ongoing opportunity to help you meet your goals as they relate to your role as an educator. Each of us who has chosen to be an educator understands what an enormous responsibility it is to work with youngsters and adults who touch our lives. Changes in practices, instructional styles, or curriculum are realities in places where people have the talent, commitment, and resources to implement them. Are these the places where you want to work? Are these the places where you want your children to attend school?

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Meeting Needs of Artistically Talented Students

BY JOAN FRANKLIN SMUTNY

How many artistically gifted children pass through the educational system with little or no support for their talents is unknown. What is known is that three decades after the Marland report which included artistic ability in its definition of giftedness (1972), most schools in the U.S. still do not identify or serve artistic children. According to a report by Ross (*National Excellence: A Case for Developing America's Talent*, 1993), students with exceptional talent in the visual and performing arts continue to be underserved by gifted programs.

There is a strong rationale for making the arts an *essential* feature of gifted education. Seeley (1989) argues that the arts enhance sensitivity, self-expression, and creative responses to complex problems. Goertz (1990; 2001) demonstrates how the arts increase the skills of observation, abstract thinking, and problem analysis.

> Education in art is an invitation to use the reasoning skills of an artist. The artist visualizes and sets goals to find and define the problem, chooses techniques to collect data, and then evaluates and revises the problem solution with imagination in order to create.... The artist, in his or her creative process, requires a high-order thought process. (2001, p. 476)

Smutny, Walker, and Meckstroth (1997) recommend using the arts with young children (K-3). Exposing artistic students to painting, drawing, poetry, music, theater, and film at an early age gives them experience with a range of learning styles and art media. This significantly advances original thinking and supports the potential of artistically gifted children during their most formative years of school.

Identification

Superior artistic work demands high intelligence and mental functioning (Clark & Zimmerman, 1984). Yet, many artistically gifted children do not test well and may not show their ability in other subjects. Even tests designed to measure creative or artistic ability may fail to identify specific gifts. For example, the Torrance Test of Creativity is a superb measure of creative thinking (a crucial dimension of artistic giftedness), but is not intended to measure specific artistic abilities. On the other hand, Gordon's (1980) music tests specifically isolate musical potential. Called the Primary Measures of Music Audition, they require no previous musical training or experience. In the area of visual art, Clark and Zimmerman (1987) describe a drawing test that measures a child's technical skill, rhythm, balance, composition, mood, and imagination.

Most measures of artistic talent—including the two just mentioned—can still fall short when it comes to children with no prior training or experience. For this reason, Goertz (2001) recommends using a range of criteria: "a panel of experts to observe and recommend the student; an exercise that requires creative problem finding and solving, peer and self-nominations, interviews, and an art portfolio" (p. 478). Students without much exposure to the arts will obviously not have a portfolio of art products. To compensate for this, Goertz proposes observations and interviews as means to include children with "potential talent" rather than just "actualized talent."

In the performing arts, educators can design auditions that target specific abilities in both experienced and less experienced children. For example, theater auditions can create a series of improvisations with body movement, expression, and speech. Rather than auditioning one child at a time, small groups could respond to a variety of theater exercises while judges look for original movement, spontaneous invention, expressive speech, emotional power, etc.. For a number of years, Jacque D'Amboise of the American Ballet Theater auditioned hundreds of New York City school children and designed movement sequences to assess dance potential in both trained and inexperienced dancers. Combined with teacher observations and informal interviews of the child and parent, auditions can be reliable measures of exceptional ability.

Artistic Talent Development

Designing appropriate classes for artistically gifted students demands as much thought and planning as in other subject areas. Program designers must consider the following critical factors: qualifications of arts teachers for gifted students; content that significantly advances skill level; activities and projects that encourage creative expression, experimentation, and innovation; opportunities to display or present completed projects through performances or art exhibits; and exposure to the lives and achievements of professional artists—past and present.

Teachers. Teachers should be accomplished artists who can offer advanced training and expose gifted children to the professional arts world. For example, while young visual artists practice their craft, they should also learn about the role of the art critic, art historian, and art theorist (Clark & Zimmerman, 1984). In addition, teachers need to avoid spending too much time on skills and technique, especially with gifted students. Artistic children have an innate need to create. Teachers who do not allow them to experiment and innovate—to write scripts, direct, design sets, compose scores or choreograph dance sequences—may inadvertently turn them away from their talents.

Technique. As in other subject areas, students with exceptional ability in the arts should be able to move at a faster pace and a more advanced level. This may involve separate or individual lessons in music, dance, or theater (Gallagher & Gallagher 1994, p. 262); in the case of visual art, a child may take a studio art class at a higher grade level. Versatile arts teachers can often differentiate instruction for exceptional students who want to progress faster. But parents should also be informed about their children's talents and involved in getting a mentor or outside master teacher to spend more concentrated time with them.

Creative expression. Gaining skill and technique is indispensable to mastering any art form. However, technique is also a lower

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level of mental functioning. Gifted artists often feel there is little of *them* in their work, and hunger for creative challenges that take them beyond technical excellence. In visual art, for example, teachers should encourage students to use a variety of arts media and instructional materials to stimulate original thinking and art expression (Goertz, 2001). "What keeps gifted children on the path of the art they love is the opportunity to express their ideas freely—to be unique, to communicate a vision, to invent."

A piano teacher once wondered why a talented student of hers was losing interest in music. He stopped practicing and seemed reluctant to come to his lessons. When she asked him about it, he quickly responded, "I want to make up my own music." He then astonished her by demonstrating several short pieces he had created that showed a true talent in composition. This child was ten. From then on, the teacher redesigned her lessons. The first half was devoted to developing technique and learning new repertoire; the second half focused on scoring and composition.

"Teachers should be accomplished artists who can offer advanced training and expose gifted children to the professional arts world."

In a larger school setting, arts teachers may doubt the feasibility of having students create within the context of group projects or productions. However, there are manageable ways to accomplish this. Here are some examples.

- In a dance, give children a chance to make suggestions about certain movement sequences; set aside sections of the music for improvised movement or child-choreographed movement within a larger piece.
- In a theatrical production, allow gifted writers to add new scenes where appropriate (this can be useful when a play needs more parts); give artists an opportunity to design sets or parts of sets; encourage sound experts to help with all the sound requirements for the production.
- In a mural, discuss the children's ideas on both concept and design; set aside sections for individual creations and embellishments.
- In performing arts exhibits, expose children to art reviews; encourage gifted writers to compose reviews for school papers or news releases for a community paper.

Display and presentation of talents. To gain exposure to the art world, artistically gifted children need opportunities to display their work or perform for the school and community. The practice of exhibiting and performing gives young artists valuable experience and training. These activities need not be confined to the school. Children can design exhibits for local banks, coffee shops, and libraries. They can also present theatrical and dance performances for community stages during fairs, special events, or as part of a fund-raising effort for the school.

Exposure to the lives of real artists. Talented children often gain inspiration from other artists they see or know. For this reason, teachers and parents should expose artistic students to biographies and documentaries about artists, visit museums and photography exhibitions, attend theater, dance and mime performances, as well as special film festivals. Opportunities to interact with working artists and participate in special workshops give them a deeper understanding of their art field, and for many young artists, provide a much needed vision for their future.

Concluding Thoughts

Artistically gifted children rarely have opportunities to develop their creative talents in school or in academic gifted programs. To begin addressing the potential of this underserved population, educators need to consider including the arts as an essential dimension of gifted education (not as a mere adjunct). The arts are *not* dispensable. Artistically gifted children should never feel that their talents lack the value of more "serious" subjects such as, math, science, social studies, or language arts. They need to learn that their artistic gifts and sensibilities, far from banishing them to the margins of their school or society, can give them the means to create. Alexandra Nechita put it well:

> Sometimes I get so immersed in my paintings I'm just somewhere else. I create my own universe that you get to see little by little through every painting I work at. And every painting I create is part of me going out little by little to all of you. (Nechita 1996, p. 80) ■

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What is the Teacher's Role in a High Quality Classroom?

BY CAROL ANN TOMLINSON

I did something this week I often do. I asked a group of adult students to reflect on and then describe the best classes they've ever taken. This time the students were about to graduate from a five-year teacher education program. Often the students are doctoral candidates. It makes no difference as far as I can tell. The answers that emerge are remarkably the same, and are interesting for both what they say and what they don't say.

These students know I teach curriculum; in fact most of them are beginning a graduate curriculum class when we work with the question. However, what's largely missing from descriptions of "best classes" is any mention of what the students learned—of curriculum. Often there is not even a suggestion of what the class was about. The dominant response in virtually every instance is a discussion of instruction—how the class was taught—including a solid focus on the role the teacher played in the class.

I'm a curriculum junkie. I wake up in the middle of the night pondering disciplinary concepts, thinking taxonomies, and rubrics. I am absolutely certain that it makes a huge difference what a teacher teaches. That is central in my professional creed and in the profession I practice. Having said that, I am not surprised at the dearth of conversation about the beauty of mathematics or the profundity of literature in descriptions of "best classes." In fact those things are subtexts in what the adult students say.

Responses typically describe how the class was taught, and most particularly the role of the teacher. Said one student this week, "She would take time to find quotes that reminded her of us and share them with us individually. It let me know she cared to know who I was—that she did know who I was. And when I looked around the classroom, I realized she was doing the same thing for everyone else." Another response went this way, "She made our work full of purpose. It made us feel important, like we were doing something that would make a difference."

"The class was fun, surprising," said another student. "We never knew what would happen next, but we always knew the teacher would make sure something interesting would happen!" Yet another respondent reflected, "I didn't like her subject but I was in love with music, and my teacher cared enough to show me how music was connected to her subject. She let me use music to learn, and what I learned was to like her subject."

"Teaching is about building lives. It is the teacher who sculpted us into something more artful than we'd been—the teacher who helped us find a firmer footing than we'd had before—whom we revisit in our memories."

That's how it goes nearly all the time. Of course if I ask, students do say that they learned a lot of chemistry or developed a passion for writing or a sense of the realness of history in those classes—but for them, that was a given. "Of course we learned," they're saying, "but it's how we connected with the teacher that stands out."

Musings on the Power of the Teacher

It no longer surprises me, if it ever did, that even highly able adult students with a professional focus on education largely omit descriptions about curriculum when they talk about the best classes they've ever taken. It's not that curriculum is unimportant to them—or that it's a negotiable element in extraordinary classes. Not at all. What these folks are clarifying is that what draws them to the subject, or cements them to it, is something that makes both them and the subject matter more "human."

Teaching is about building lives. It is the teacher who sculpted us into something more artful than we'd been—the teacher who helped us find a firmer footing than we'd had before—whom we revisit in our memories.

Of course the curriculum mattered. Science, math, music, or computer science were part of the teacher's vehicle for helping us become stronger. But it was the teacher who proved we could master the ideas and skills. Subject matter was the common language through which we tested our thought. It was a symbol for the bond we shared with each other, with the world we were going to inherit. But in important ways, the "stuff" took a back seat to the bonding, the quest, and the meaning.

Since my most recent encounter with the descriptions of best classes, I've heard a veteran educator for whom I have great respect make a related comment, and I've recalled a conversation with ninth graders. Both helped me understand the significance of the teacher as well. The educator said, "I hired teachers who loved kids, and then I taught them to teach math. You can't do it the other way." She's right, I believe. The teacher's affection and respect for students is the tether that connects the teacher and the taught.

The ninth graders "got it" too. I watched them develop a love affair with a classroom in which the teacher had a somewhat fragile grasp of her subject. Although she was an older teacher, she was new in the classroom and new to teaching literature. Several times I watched as she "taught" students incorrect meanings of terms, or suggested "iffy" interpretations of readings. It was clear to me, however, that the students were transformed in her classroom. They were respectful of her, of one another, of what they studied, and tasks they completed. They entered and left the room with something I kept wanting to call "reverence."

It is true that the content errors were there and that the kids knew it. In talking with

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several of them one day, I broached the subject gently. Yes, they said, they knew there were content errors, and generally they figured them out and corrected their own learning. "Then why," I asked them, "is this class so important to you?" Without hesitation, one of them answered, "For nine years, teachers have told us what to think. This teacher has shown us that we can think and how to think." Not only did they get it. They helped me get it as well.

Who we are and what we do as teachers is far more profound in young lives than what we teach. If we care to transmit our subject matter, we had better first be about the business of connecting with the kids whom we wish to teach.

Connecting with Kids

What is it teachers do that make them builders of lives? There are many routes to connecting with kids, and many great teachers probably link with learners at a level of such automaticity that they can't tell you precisely how they do it. Most great teachers, however, have cultivated a repertoire of ways to connect with kids in classrooms that are usually over-populated and time-starved. Here are a few ideas.

1. Study your students. Take a minute every day to remember that the tennis shoes are attached to lives, each one full of stories, dreams, and warts. Take notes on the kids individually and as a group. Pick out a few to study each day or each week. Think about what works for you when you absolutely, positively must learn something. Then apply those strategies to knowing, thinking about, and understanding each kid who entrusts a significant portion of his or her life to you!
2. Develop a taste for the kids you find least attractive. We all have tastes. It's human. It's also our obligation as classroom leaders to help each student build a life—even those we wish someone else were teaching this year! Of course, beneath whatever is unappealing to us is another of those lives full of stories and hopes. When we learn to find significance in each student, we become more deserving of the title "teacher." Further, when students see us accepting of kids who are prickly or even outcasts, both the model and the message are huge. Most important, of course, is the likelihood that we position ourselves to make a positive difference in the life of someone who may have a particular need of it.
3. Give each student opportunities to be at the center of your universe. When I was a brand new and clueless teacher, my first professional mentor gave me a difficult and potent piece of advice. Her name was Mrs. Gardner. She was nearing the end of her days as a teacher just as I was experiencing my first days. We taught in a challenging high school setting, and students were absolutely different with her from what they were with me—and in fact, from what they were with most of our colleagues. Again there was this thing I could only call "reverence" for her and all things that transpired in her classroom. Of course I thought it was magic. It took years before I understood how she conjured the magic. She gave me a clue early on, however. "I mark my success each day," she said, "by whether each of my students can go home with a personal Mrs. Gardner story." That's a tall order when kids file through your life 150 per day; it's no simple task if you teach 25 or 30. Most days, however, Mrs. Gardner earned the right to sleep on a successful day.

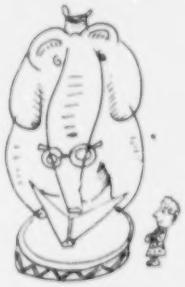

ILLUSTRATION BY JON PEARSON

How does a teacher invite students to center stage in her universe? Maybe it happens when a teacher stands daily at the classroom door and as each student enters, initiates a personal exchange; sometimes those moments make the day for a student. Maybe it happens because a teacher finds time to meet with individuals and small groups in conferences. Those hard-won moments may happen in class or during a planning period. I was always amazed at the power of a conversation that took place when I called a student to my room for a few minutes during my planning period.
4. Watch the kids and reflect aloud. There's much power in a comment to the class about the growth, or tenacity, or compassion you've observed. I taught with someone who used to say to her students—just often enough, "I've been watching you a lot as you work lately, and I made a wonderful discovery about..." or "As I've watched you recently, you've taught me something I hadn't understood before..." How elegant to be worth the teacher's time—to teach the teacher!
5. Compliment your students. Compliments have to be honest, of course. Kids are great hokey-detectors. Compliments can come in many forms. "Here's a book (or a cartoon, or a joke, or an idea) that reminded me of you..." "Last night I was thinking about the work you've been doing, and I had an idea that I think may be useful..." "I thought you might like..." These are powerful indicators to a student that he or she matters—that he or she is worth the teacher's time—that he or she is worthy as a person.
6. Set goals that are a little scary to the student—and then make sure the student reaches them. Precisely which goals are a bit intimidating will, of course, vary with different learners. But there is little that is more ennobling than realizing that a person you respect believes you are better or more capable than you had thought yourself!
7. Scaffold success. "Tell me how your project is going." "What's the next step you'll be taking in your work?" "Whom can you show this to so that you get some high quality feedback?" "What do I need to do in class to make sure you have the knowledge and skill to do an outstanding job?" "Who would like to stay after school one day this week so we can work together to make sure your work is on the right track?" These and a score of similar statements suggest that a student's work is worthy of a teacher's time and thought. Such options also facilitate development of a community of learners in which students collaborate rather than work in isolation.

Personal Reflections about Connection

When I ask my students about their most powerful classes, I also think about the ones that were most significant in my own life. I loved fourth grade math because my teacher selected me to walk to the edge of the playground each afternoon at 1:30 to meet her young son as he got off his school bus. I left math for a minute each day to do that, and returned as much like a grown-up as I could.

I spent much of eighth grade copying quotations from books of quotations in a spiral notebook. Mr. Arnold let me do that

instead of some projects he had in mind. He told me it was important that I wanted to develop an ear for language. The meaning of this to an awkward adolescent was that I was doing important work. Up to that point, I had never felt that what I did was important. I learned to love writing even more in 11th grade because Ms. Parker read our work aloud in class with such reverence. The notes she put on my papers were encouraging too. I know now, of course, that my 12th grade writing was dreadfully shallow and soupy, even for a 16-year-old. She accepted my offerings with respect, however, and I kept writing.

Mrs. Morgan showed me how to do a quantitative research project in 12th grade. I don't know to this day why she did it. The work had nothing to do with her class really. And it took time for her to move me through the project step-by-step. I remember that study with amazing clarity, for Mrs. Morgan shaped who I was because she believed in me and took the time to show me I could do something special.

Mr. Lugenbeel completely transformed me. I was dreadfully shy—mute with fear of speaking up. Mr. Lugenbeel and a high school assistant principal conspired to enroll me in his high school speech class. He didn't indulge me in my debilitating fears, but said rather, "I need you to make a speech at a civic club for me later this month. We have just enough time; let's meet in the afternoons for the next couple of weeks to get you ready." I was too terrified to tell him no. He simply showed me a mountain that I was sure I could not scale, and took me out to dinner with his family to celebrate the fact that I did.

Making the Link

In no instance did any of these teachers do more for me than they did for others. In no instance did they hover over me. What they did, however, was to study me, and accept as a potential achiever an awkward and not especially promising kid, give me a chance to be at the center of their universe, talk to me about what I was doing and what I could do, compliment me with concrete challenges, and invest enough of themselves to ensure that I succeeded beyond my own vision of possible success.

The telling thing is this: I'm sure I learned fractions in fourth grade, but I don't remember that part. I remember feeling trusted and honored, and as a result, I found a new determination to like math. While I don't remember what I learned in Mrs. Morgan's psychology class, I remember the basic principles of research she taught me outside of class. How could I not remember them, for they were evidence that an important person thought me important. I had to get it right. Mr. Arnold and Ms. Parker affirmed that I had something to say. How could I not like writing after that?

I can't recall a single teacher whose class would be on my "best class" list who taught "stuff" without first connecting with students as individuals. In fact, I can't even recall their classes.

Is it important to know math well in order to be a great math teacher, to know science deeply in order to be a great science teacher, to have a passion for music in order to be a great orchestra teacher? I absolutely think so! But I have no evidence it's enough. I think a great teacher constructs durable and trustworthy bridges between herself and her students (often using subject matter as part of the construction material), then issues the irresistible invitation, "Come see this magic world I love. I care for you so much that I must share it with you!" ■

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SPECIALIZED COUNSELING

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try to camouflage their abilities. Though counselors cannot change negative situations single-handedly, it is important that counselors learn strategies for changing others' opinions regarding individual differences. For example, training in multicultural appreciation can easily be extended to incorporate the acceptance of giftedness, and programs aimed at improving acceptance of people with other exceptionalities also can be adapted to address schoolwide attitudes about giftedness and talent.

To deal with the affective issues concerning gifted students, counselors must have training that specifically addresses self-concept. Strategies for developing self-knowledge, self- acceptance, social relationships, self-expectations, risk-taking, and self-esteem are critical components of an appropriate professional development program. While such strategies can be delivered through group counseling of able students, counselors must also address how each of these critical aspects of self-concept plays out in the lives of individual gifted students.

Stage C: Feelings of Inner Conflict. While many people internally debate the circumstances of the world as it exists juxtaposed against the world as it ought to be, gifted and talented individuals tend to contemplate these contrasts more frequently and with greater intensity than others (Nelson, 1989). Inner conflict of this sort has been theorized to spur further self-development (Assagioli, 1965; Dabrowski, 1972; Jung, 1954; Maslow, 1968; Mahoney, 1998). However, if such psychic pain is to be channeled positively, counseling is required; young people in particular will require an adult confidante who can provide trustworthy advice and unwavering assistance. Although some gifted and talented students find this personal level of support at home or through mentors, it is likely that many lack such "built-in" support structures. Consequently, the presence of counselors with appropriate training in giftedness and the psychological needs of gifted and talented youth is pivotal to their emotional well-being and personal development.

Issues such as unsparing self-criticism, tendency toward perfectionism, feelings of inadequacy or of being an impostor, and balancing exogenous with endogenous expectations are among the numerous potential problems that gifted students are likely to confront at some point. A comprehensive professional development program for counselors will include training and experiences relevant to the inner conflicts of gifted students (Robinson, 1996). If counselors lack such background, not only will they be unable to facilitate formation of confidential relationships for gifted students with other adults, they will be unlikely to serve that role themselves.

Explaining the Model

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship of each stage of the DM-PDC to the foundations of counseling useful for implementing interventions. Sample intervention strategies, while not discussed in this article, are aligned with each stage of the model. Though these strategies are not restricted to the specific

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stage with which they are aligned—each can be used with other stages depending on an individual gifted student's needs—the alignment presented is the most likely application of each intervention. Note that the stages of the DM-PDC are dynamic: professional development is sequential from stage to stage, but is also circular, illustrating the need for on-going professional development for counselors across all three stages.

Conclusion

Counselors occupy a pivotal position in serving the affective development of gifted and talented students. Often based in single schools, counselors can serve many roles in on-site advocacy and support for gifted pupils. While counseling gifted students is obviously the crucial task that counselors must fulfill, they can also become attitude change-makers by sharing knowledge and skills with other adults who can, in turn, improve the school climate for gifted and talented students. First, however, counselors must become involved in a program of systematic professional development in order to enable them to perform their critical counseling responsibilities. Since few counseling preservice or graduate programs offer such training, it is critical that schools and school districts themselves embark on professional growth programs about giftedness for their counselors. The DM-PDC represents one significant means for developing and implementing such a program, and its special strength lies in its developmental focus, seeking evolutionary growth of counselors much as counselors seek step-by-step growth in their students. Lacking this type of sweeping professional development effort for counselors, it is probable that many gifted and talented students will languish emotionally in schools. Can schools ethically tolerate this neglect, and can society afford to suffer the consequences? ■

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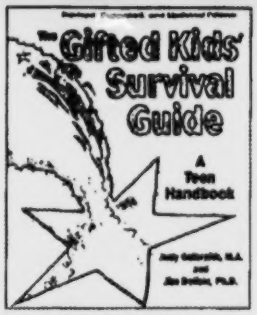

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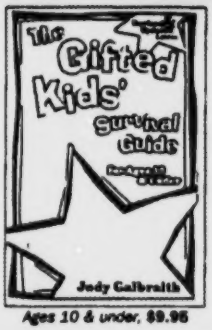

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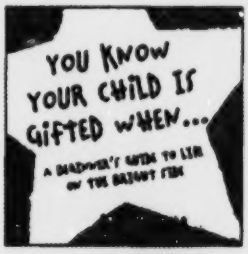

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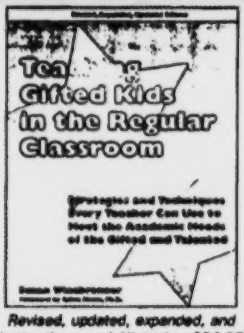

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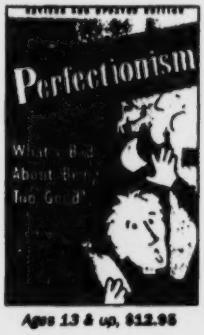

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Teaching Scholarship

BY SANDRA N. KAPLAN

The development of an appreciation to learn cannot be left to chance nor can it be considered a natural attribute of giftedness easily activated by challenging curriculum. An analysis of research and the experiences of educators indicate a need to plan and implement curricular experiences that directly teach gifted students the responsibility learners have for their own ability. This concept has been developed into a series of lessons related to "Scholarliness" or the "Role of Becoming a Scholar." Germane to these lessons is introducing gifted students to the importance of some traits of a scholar: curiosity, pondering, academic humility, and tenacity.

The following lesson on "Tenacity" uses the deductive reasoning mode of teaching.

This lesson has been developed and field-tested as part of a Javits Department of Education Grant (OERI): Curriculum Project T.W.O.

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Lesson Plan - Tenacity

Objectives: Students will determine the relevance of perseverance as tenacity to attain success, realize achievement, or recognize one's potential by studying the work style and ethics of scholars and their accomplishments. They will summarize their knowledge in the development of a case study.

Model of Teaching: Deductive Reasoning

Motivation	• Present adages to students and ask them to interpret each saying: **A rolling stone gathers no moss** / **A stitch in time saves nine** / **Keep your nose to the grindstone** **The early bird catches the worm** / **No pain, no gain** / **Keep the pedal to the metal** • Discuss these sayings about "workers" and "working" with respect to trends, perspective, and ethics. Summarize the various interpretations given by students.
Introduce the Big Idea	• Review the differences between big ideas in the form of a generalization, principle and theory. (Generalization: statement linking two or more concepts; Principle: a law; Theory: a belief). • Practice defining the meaning of these big ideas about work.

Introduce the Big Idea (cont.)	• *Compare the different forms of these big ideas.* **GENERALIZATION** – Work is a means of survival. **PRINCIPLE** - Work must be rewarded. People receive compensation for their work. **THEORY** – From each according to his ability; to each according to his need (Karl Marx). • Introduce students to the following theory: **Tenacity is more important than ability.** • Discuss the contextual meaning of both "tenacity" and "ability." Create a mini word wall or "Study Ledge" that displays synonyms related to these words found in the big idea. **tenacity** | | | **hard work** **ability** | | |
State the Assumptions	• Ask students to write their initial interpretation of the theory on a 3x5 card that will be placed and sealed in an envelope. *As I understand the theory, tenacity*
Research	• Present students with the profiles of historical figures who have reached prominence. Note, that the individuals to be studied should meet these criteria: 1. accomplished in a specific discipline 2. tenacious, perseverant 3. above average ability or talent 4. recognized as a contributor • Use these profiles to conduct research to validate or negate the theory under study. • The following profiles of scholars can be used as part of the lesson. Born January 17, 1706, in Boston, Massachusetts, Benjamin Franklin became a printer, writer, scientist, inventor, businessman and statesman. Franklin was a Renaissance man. As the 15th child in his family, Franklin went to work at age 10. He was ambitious and intent on self-improvement. He became a skilled printer while reading widely and developing a writing style. Starting with no capital, he advanced rapidly and through his publishing of *Poor Richard's Almanac*, became a household word. He was active in the community, helping to establish the first U.S. lending library, as well as an academy that evolved into the University of Pennsylvania. He contributed many inventions such as the fuel-efficient Franklin open stove, bifocal lens, lightening rod, etc. He is most famous for his involvement with the Constitutional Convention and his famous kite experiment, demonstrating that lightning is an electrical discharge. (www.biography.com)

Research (cont.)

Born in Landport, Hampshire, England, UK, Charles Dickens was the son of a clerk in the navy pay office. In 1814 he moved to London, then to Chatham, where he received some schooling. He found a menial post with a solicitor, then took up journalism, becoming a reporter at Doctor's Commons. Dickens worked relentlessly, producing several successful novels, which created a Shakespearean gallery of characters. He also campaigned against many of the social evils of his time. His novels have provided the basis for many successful adaptations in the theatre, in the cinema, on radio, and on television. (www.biography.com)

Biologist and botanist, born in Heinzendorf, Austria Gregor Mendel was ordained a priest in 1847. After studying science at Vienna (1851–3), he became abbot at Brno (1868). He researched the inheritance traits in plants, especially edible peas, and his experiments in hybridity in plants led to the formulation of his laws of segregation and independent assortment. His principle of factorial inheritance and the quantitative investigation of single characters have provided the basis for modern genetics. (www.biography.com)

In 1934 in New York City was born a brilliant man named Carl Sagan who would later become a world renowned astronomer. Sagan attended many prestigious universities throughout the nation. His enthusiasm for space science and the possibility of intelligent life elsewhere in the universe stimulated the public's interest through such mediums as television and books. The movie *Contact* starring Jodie Foster was inspired by Carl Sagan's enthusiasm for space science. The main character of *Contact*, Ellie Arroway portrays Sagan's life in miniature. While not sharing Sagan's awards and rapport with the public, Ellie Arroway is a brilliant, driven, self-reliant young astronomer obsessed with SETI. Dr. Arroway endures scorn and ridicule from the public and the science world for her dedication to discovering signs of extraterrestrial life, just as Sagan has. (www.biography.com)

Share and Summarize

- There may be insufficient research from the profiles provided in this lesson to prove or disprove the theory. Discuss with students the need to research independently to gather additional or different information. Teachers may substitute other individuals or profiles for students to research if they wish.
- Introduce students to the concept of a Study Team and Case Study approach to analyze an individual

Case Study - "an intensive analysis of an individual unit (as a person or community) stressing developmental factors in relation to environment."

Share and Summarize (cont.)

- Discuss the major categories usually found in a case study.

Case Study
- **Biographical Data**
- **Interest Inventory**
- **Diagnosis**
- **Behavior Patterns**
- **Interventions**

- Inform students that the case study outline could guide their discussion about the individuals they researched.
- Discuss the profiles of the individuals. Use the information from this discussion as a transition to determine whether or not the students can prove the generalization.
- Use this chart to guide the application of evidence from the profiles to prove or disprove the theory. Encourage students to give specific evidence in the form of an attribute, quote, or incident.

Tenacity is more important than ability.	
Prove	**Disprove**

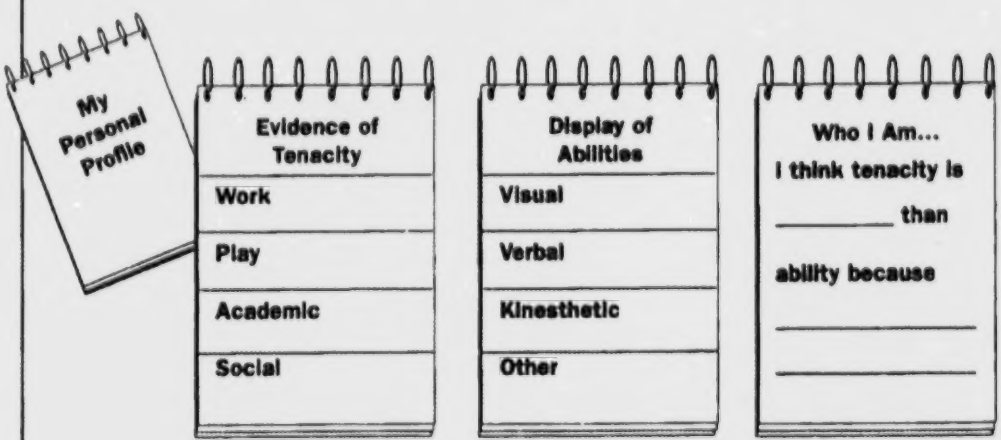
- Consider using the completed chart as the basis of a debate with students assuming the AGREE (Pro) or DISAGREE (con) positions.

Verify Stated Assumptions

- Distribute the envelopes with students stated assumptions. Have students discuss the relationship between their original interpretation of the theory and their current opinion or reaction to the theory as defined by their research.
- Discuss the relationship between fact and opinion and how they shape points of view.

Culmination

- Instruct students to prepare a Personal Profile that represents a self-assessment related to their tenacity and ability. Note these examples of personal profiles.

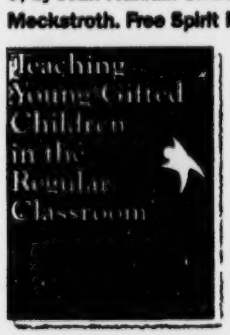


Must-Have Books for Educators of the Gifted and Talented

BY JERRY FLACK

Every field has its literature and gifted child education is certainly no exception. There is a wealth of scholarship in the field, initiated in the 1920s by Lewis Terman at Stanford University. In the past decade there has been a great increase in the number of gifted education scholarly texts and practical strategy books. The beginning teacher of gifted education can profit mightily from the wisdom found in the books listed below. Of course, any list of ten must-have books in gifted child education necessarily omits at least a score of other outstanding titles and authors. Although they are not listed here, certainly the books of E. Paul Torrance, Carol Tomlinson, Donald J. Treffinger, Sandra Kaplan, Robert Sternberg, Carolyn Callahan, Howard Gardner, and many others should become a part of the wise teacher's reading agenda. The author is confident that energetic new teachers will ultimately find their way to all the great resources in gifted child education. These ten must-have books are listed in no particular order of preference.

TEACHING YOUNG GIFTED CHILDREN IN THE REGULAR CLASSROOM: IDENTIFYING, NURTURING, AND CHALLENGING AGES 4-9, by Joan Franklin Smutny, Sally Yahnke Walker, and Elizabeth A. Meckstroth. Free Spirit Publishing, 1997



Primary teachers of gifted children state that they simply could not teach young gifted children without this book. It is indispensable. Since formal identification of preschool and primary-aged children as gifted students is rare, two features of this eminently practical book are especially valuable. First, the authors provide relevant activities for all children. And second, they furnish numerous ways in which teachers can observe gifted and talented behaviors while children learn and play. The authors also share pages of valuable information-gathering forms such as "About My Child," that help classroom teachers learn about the special talents young gifted children possess but have yet to exhibit at school. Finally, the authors provide informed discussions about such relevant issues as grouping, social and emotional needs, and assessment. This book is a gem.

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CREATIVITY, 2 vols. By Mark A. Runco & Steven R. Pritzker (Eds.). Academic Press, 1999

Creativity is one of the most critical elements of gifted behavior, yet remains one of the most elusive concepts in the field. The authors have weighed in with a massive, two-volume, 1660+ page encyclopedia that attempts to survey and define this most important but intangible psychological construct. Given the imprecise nature of the subject matter, they succeed to a remarkable degree in bringing forth a valuable reference work that serves both general and scholarly audiences. Its nearly 200 articles include: specific fields of study such as art, music, dance, design, architecture, and political science; creativity related to circumstances such as genetics, birth order, and cultural differences; educational programs and courses; and 23 biographies of creative individuals such as Charles Darwin, Leonardo da Vinci, Sylvia Plath, Jean Piaget, Alexander Graham Bell, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Virginia Woolf. Creativity affects and enriches us all in music listened to, invented tools used, or art and design observed. When experts offer explanations of how it works to make life better, readers should take note.

WORK LEFT UNDONE: CHOICES AND COMPROMISES OF TALENTED FEMALES, by Sally M. Reis. Creative Learning Press, 1998

One of the most compelling issues facing parents and teachers, and indeed, gifted students themselves, is the issue of equity for gifted females. Across the years, a number of scholars have examined this critical issue and have written wisely and informatively about it. Sally Reis has written what may well be the definitive book on the topic. *Work Left Undone* should be read by every teacher—not just those who teach gifted—for as Reis points out, many girls hide their giftedness and may not even be identified. This is powerful reading. Her use of case studies is particularly effective. The human stories cause the statistics to resonate with the reader and take on personal significance. Indeed she writes so well and explains research so cogently that the reader experiences the feeling of having a fascinating personal conversation with her about this vital subject.

THE MULTIPLE MENU MODEL: A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR DEVELOPING DIFFERENTIATED CURRICULUM, by Joseph S. Renzulli, Jann H. Leppien, & Thomas S. Hays. Creative Learning Press, 2000

Perhaps no topic in gifted education is more talked about today than "differentiated curriculum." The need for differentiation is universally recognized, but the question remains, "How do you do it?" This book provides the answers. It opens with a knowledge menu, providing a worthy introduction to knowledge and how it is constructed. The authors then move on to menus of instructional strategies, sequences, and products, including excellent examples of teacher-created materials. They also provide a wealth of templates teachers can use to design their own differentiated curriculum. This is a must-have vol-

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ume for new teachers who are serious about creating appropriate curriculum for gifted and talented learners.

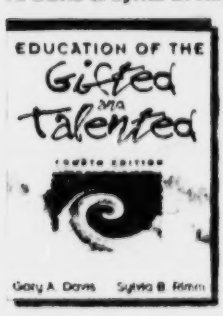
GROWING UP GIFTED: DEVELOPING THE POTENTIAL OF CHILDREN AT HOME AND AT SCHOOL, 5th edition, by Barbara Clark. Merrill, 1997

Since 1979 Barbara Clark's *Growing Up Gifted* has been a boon to both parents and educators who wish to better understand the nature of giftedness and how to nurture it. It is an omnibus text with tremendous breadth, covering definitions, identification, programs, special populations, and differentiated content and instruction. However, additional strengths of Clark's work are her explanation of brain research and its applicability to gifted students, and her emphasis on the brain's intuitive capacity. Clark's own model of integrating intellectual functions (intuitive, cognitive, affective, and physical/sensing) is particularly well explained and is accompanied by fine model lessons. *Growing Up Gifted* also places special emphasis on young gifted children, no doubt one reason why the book is so popular with parents.

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATING GIFTED & TALENTED LEARNERS, 3rd edition, by Joyce VanTassel-Baska (Ed.). Love Publishing, 1998

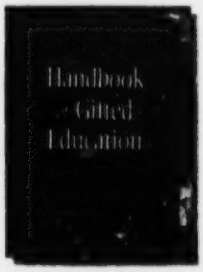
There are many strengths in this text, but perhaps the greatest is the expertise of the five authors of its 28 chapters: Joyce VanTassel-Baska, John Feldhusen, Linda Silverman, Kenneth Seeley, and Camilla Benbow. Each brings to the book his or her particular expertise. For example, Silverman writes wisely and informatively about Dabrowski's concept of overexcitabilities and visual-spatial gifted learners. Benbow explores acceleration as a method of meeting the academic needs of gifted learners. VanTassel-Baska outlines a comprehensive model for program development. A particular bonus is the devotion of separate chapters to specific disciplines such as math, science, social studies, language arts, and the arts and humanities. The writing is uniformly excellent, and although it is the product of five separate people, the chapters flow together seamlessly.

EDUCATION OF THE GIFTED AND TALENTED, 4th edition, by Gary A. Davis & Sylvia B. Rimm. Allyn and Bacon, 1998



Davis and Rimm attempt to place all the critical information teachers should have about teaching gifted students in one comprehensive volume. This is the best standard textbook in the field, and is used in countless gifted education courses across the nation. The text has several positive features. First, it is truly comprehensive including a history of the field, gifted characteristics and identification, programming options, administrative adaptations, curriculum models, creativity, underachievement, gifted children with disabilities, parenting, and much more. Indeed, it is difficult to think of a subject Davis and Rimm have overlooked. The second great virtue of this text is its readability. While they do not sacrifice scholarship, the authors write in a style that makes this book a pleasure to read.

HANDBOOK OF GIFTED EDUCATION, 2nd edition, by Nicholas Colangelo & Gary A. Davis (Eds.). Allyn and Bacon, 1997



This is an erudite work that contains writings by the top scholars in the field, and answers almost every question a teacher or parent is likely to ask. The scope is staggering and the expertise of the authors is impressive. Howard Gardner writes about multiple intelligences. C. June Maker writes about enrichment and acceleration. S. Lee Winocur writes about critical thinking. A specially strong section is that on counseling, which offers valuable insights for teachers, parents, and school counselors. Overall, the best experts in the field write about 44 compelling topics of interest.

TEACHING GIFTED KIDS IN THE REGULAR CLASSROOM: STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES EVERY TEACHER CAN USE TO MEET THE ACADEMIC NEEDS OF THE GIFTED AND TALENTED, revised, expanded, updated edition, by Susan Winebrenner, Free Spirit Publishing, 2000

Almost from the day the first edition was published in 1992, Susan Winebrenner's book became a classic in the field. Moreover, it is a book that has transcended the relatively small field of gifted child education and has become popular in professional teacher libraries everywhere. One of the great strengths of Winebrenner's book is its ease in use. The author provides a multitude of forms busy teachers need to instantly begin compacting, enriching, and accelerating the curriculum for their students. She also provides Extension Menus of activities to challenge gifted students, and addresses virtually every discipline within the curriculum. In the new edition of the book, she provides a special chapter for parents, and expanded information on identification. Winebrenner was a classroom teacher and a gifted education specialist for many years, and her experience and wisdom shine through the pages of this very practical resource.

THE GIFTED KIDS' SURVIVAL GUIDE: A TEEN HANDBOOK, by Judy Galbraith & Jim Delisle. Free Spirit Publishing, 1996

This book has seen several editions and revisions, all of which are excellent resources for gifted and talented students. The best thing about this resource is its potential to empower students. For example, recently a middle school student patiently and tactfully set up a conference with her grade-level principal and all her teachers. At the meeting she politely and diplomatically expressed her concerns about the lack of challenge in her present education. The adults were impressed by how well Rachel approached the problem and enthusiastically began to differentiate the curriculum for her. Where did she gain her idea for the conference? From *The Gifted Kids' Survival Guide*. This book is filled with information that answers students' questions about being gifted and provides strategies for them to make their education and their lives more fulfilling.

JERRY D. FLACK, Ph.D. is Professor of Education and President's Teaching Scholar at the University of Colorado. His publications include: *From the Land of Enchantment; Creative Teaching with Fairy Tales; Inventions and Inventors; Lives of Promise, Odysseys; and Voyages and Inventing.*

Professional Development

BY CAROLYN KOTTMEYER

My perspective is that of a parent, but this is an area where I see a lot of room for improvement. My kids have been in school for a combined total of nearly eight years, and during that time I've been told things that would curl your hair.

"Gifted is like a light switch, you're either gifted or you're not."

"It doesn't matter what grade she's placed in. Gifted kids will learn in spite of us!"

"We were told that our daughter needed to repeat a year in math because she's 'too intuitive'"

Don't get me wrong; I know there are some great educators out there, but I believe there is much work to do in professional development to bring everyone up to speed regarding the development and education of gifted children.

Last issue I recommended that you take the National Research Center quiz on "Distinguishing Myths From Realities: NRC/GT Research" www.sp.uconn.edu/~nrcgt/news/winter98/wintr983.html.

If you didn't know all of the research-based answers, it's probably not your fault! Consider the miniscule amount of time spent on topics relating to gifted children during your professional education. One Ph.D. in education told me that during his entire time as a student earning three degrees, he received perhaps two hours on the gifted child. That was the total time for a bachelor's degree, masters, and Ph.D.—all in education. And it wasn't two credit hours, just two hours. Others in similar programs around the country include zero hours—nothing at all on the gifted student. Yet gifted students comprise 2.5 to 5 percent of the student population, perhaps more. That's not a large population, but it certainly warrants more than two hours of training.

In most states, as in most countries, educators have had pretty much to fend for themselves in seeking training in gifted education and it has been difficult. The situation is somewhat improved now as the Internet begins to provide more possibilities. Here are a few Internet resources to get you started.

A number of U.S. colleges and universities are beginning to offer gifted education programs at the masters degree level. A few of these programs even offer distance learning options, so that you can "attend" from out of state; among these are at Ball State University in Indiana, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and the University of South Florida. Check out the ever-growing list at Continuing Education www.hoagies-gifted.org/continuing_ed.htm.

Many people have accepted some popular misconceptions. For example, most people have heard of Dr. David Elkind, author of *The Hurried Child* and *Miseducation: Preschoolers at Risk*. From the titles you might get the impression that he is against subject and grade acceleration for gifted children, but you would be wrong. Read his essay, Acceleration, published in the journal *Young Children*, *43*, 4, May 1988, at www.hoagiesgifted.org/elkind.htm.

Then there is David Goleman's *Emotional Intelligence*. It is a best-selling book based on theories developed by two scientists from the University of New Hampshire and Yale. See Promotional Intelligence at www.salon.com/books/it/1999/06/28/emotional/ and continue through all four pages of the article for a surprising look at the relationship between emotion and intelligence as determined by the research.

For more research and information on the education of gifted children from curriculum adjustments to grouping to other educational theories, see Hoagies' Gifted Education Educators page at: www.hoagiegifted.org/educators.htm.

Kids' Korner

Let's look at science. Science sites on the Internet abound, but which ones do kids come back to again and again?

How Stuff Works at www.howstuffworks.com/ is one of the greatest science answer sites. From common household machines to aviation to engines to electronics, it includes just about anything you want to know about. For example, our family has used this site to answer questions on UPC codes and power distribution grids—which started when I tried to explain why Grammy had no power when we did, even though she lives just over the hill!

Interactive sites grab everyone's attention. Build A Bridge at www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/bridge/build.html lets you choose your site, design a bridge, and see how your results work.

Interactive geology sites are cool. Geology Labs On-Line at vcourseware3.calstatela.edu/GeoLabs/ includes Virtual Earthquake, Virtual River (Flooding and Discharge), and Virtual Dating (no, not girls and boys, but Isochron or Radiocarbon dating), with more Virtual projects coming soon. These virtual experiments allow you to change the parameters, and see how the slightest change can make a big difference in the results.

Don't miss the Virtual Fly Lab at vcourseware3.calstatela.edu/VirtualFlyLab/IntrVflyLab.html. This is an interactive genetics experiment! And for the queasy parents of brave scientist children, there's even a Virtual Frog Dissection Kit at www-itg.lbl.gov/vfrog/. I kid you not!

For lots of good text and graphic information, plus action games to demonstrate the power of Plate Tectonics and Super Storms, check out Discovery Channel's Earth Journeys at www.discovery.com/exp/earthjourneys/earthjourneys.html.

Younger kids enjoy the Magic School Bus Activity Lab at place.scholastic.com/MagicSchoolBus with changing activities; right now it has the Habitat Match-Up game and Gets An Earful—a game about sounds, and more.

Neuroscience for Kids at faculty.washington.edu/chudler/neurok.html allows kids (and teachers, and parents!) to explore the nervous system, from sensory systems and the spinal cord right to the effects of drugs. You can also play Synaptic Tag or Brain Games.

For more science sites on many different science topics, check out Hoagies' Kids Math and Science Links at www.hoagieskids.org/kidsMnS.htm.

CAROLYN KOTTMEYER is the webmistress of Hoagies' Gifted Education Page www.hoagies-gifted.org and Hoagies' Kids and Teens Page www.hoagieskids.org. She serves on the SENG Board of Directors (Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted), and writes occasionally for the Hollingworth Center's Highly Gifted Children and for Our Gifted Children.

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The Complete National Geographic

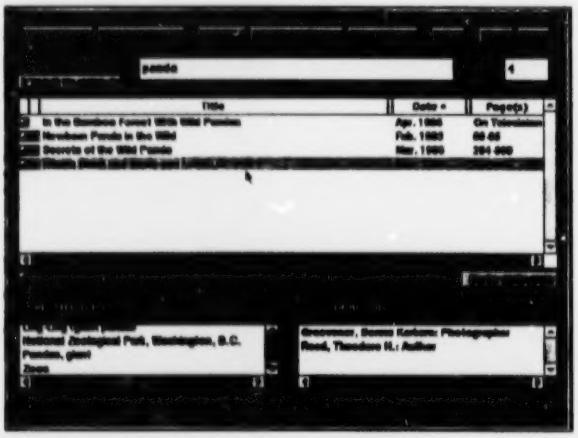
BY PATRICIA ROBERTSON

How many times have you found old *National Geographic* magazines piled in the corner of a classroom or the library? Always a great source for pictures, *National Geographic* is also a vast repository of written information covering the late nineteenth and the entire twentieth century. The problem with using this resource effectively has always been the huge volume of information spread over more than 9000 articles. Even if you knew just what you were looking for, finding the exact issue could be a challenge. Finally, a complete set of back issues of *National Geographic* is now available as The Complete National Geographic on CD ROM. No more looking through dusty, musty piles of magazines. No more occasional pages removed by eager students who have been told they need to illustrate a report.

The Complete National Geographic is a winner of the 1998 Codie Award for Best Reference Product from the Software and Information Industry Association. The current version has 31 CD ROMs that contain every article, picture, and advertisement published in the magazine since 1888. While this is a massive amount of information, the software offers many features to aid students and teachers in efficiently locating and retrieving information as described below.

This CD ROM set provides users with access to primary source material covering a wide range of topics over more than a century. Diverse topics such as insect pests, the Balkan region (starting in 1912), China (starting in 1897), automobiles, zoos, and photography all receive the quality coverage for which *National Geographic* is known. Except for the supplement maps, all content is included. The photographs and maps are the same ones that students have cut out for decades. The advertisements over the decades provide a fascinating look at the way our society has evolved. The breadth of information in this set provides resources for almost any teacher or student over a wide range of subjects and grades.

Although the set is licensed for use on a single computer, more than one student can use the set effectively. When starting the program, the user is presented with a Sign In Screen and can select the appropriate user name. When students find articles that they want to find again, they can use the Bookmarks option to create an entry for that source. Bookmarks are saved under each user's name and will be there the next time the user signs on.



This feature also permits teachers to provide students with a ready-made set of reference materials on a topic by bookmarking a series of articles and then using the topic as a User Name. Students could prepare a report in the same way. The information would be readily available for a scheduled presentation.

Another useful feature is the ability to track articles viewed during a single session by an individual user. Backtracking to review a point then becomes relatively easy. This feature does not save the list of articles when the student exits the program, so pertinent articles will also need to be bookmarked.

The Complete National Geographic has a very complete search engine with multiple options. The search can be limited to a specific time period or a particular type of material. Boolean Searches are also supported thus providing students with practice in effective search techniques. Search results are presented in a list that be printed. Clicking on a listed article prompts the user to insert the correct CD ROM. A list of Related Topics gives the student avenues for further exploration.

Using the software takes a bit of getting used to. Be sure to take a close look at installation options. If your computer has enough hard disk space and the option is available, be sure to install the entire database and register all the CD ROM disks. Searches will then run faster, and users can access any CD ROM in the entire collection without rerunning the installer program.

Articles can be printed in their entirety or selected pages can be printed in black and white or color. Content on the CD ROMs was scanned, so the images and text are sometimes a bit fuzzy. It may take some experimentation to find the best printing options. Updaters to improve print and viewing quality are currently available at http://www.support.learningco.com/downloads.asp

The program runs on both Windows and Macintosh platforms. The Windows version requires Windows 95 or 98, a Pentium processor (90 MHZ or faster), 24MB RAM, 70MB free hard-disk space, SVGA video card supporting 16-bit color, 16-bit sound card and speakers, and a 4x CD-ROM drive. The Macintosh version requires a PowerPC running System 7.5 or higher, 32MB RAM, 70MB free hard-disk space, 640x480 16-bit color display, and a 4x CD-ROM drive.

The Complete National Geographic
National Geographic Society
http://www.nationalgeographic.com
1-800-243-6169

PATRICIA ROBERTSON has experience as a classroom teacher, library media specialist, technology coordinator, and administrator. She has been involved with technology in education for nearly 20 years. She can be reached at: probert@tells.org.

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Sparking the Reading Appetite

BY JODY FICKES SHAPIRO

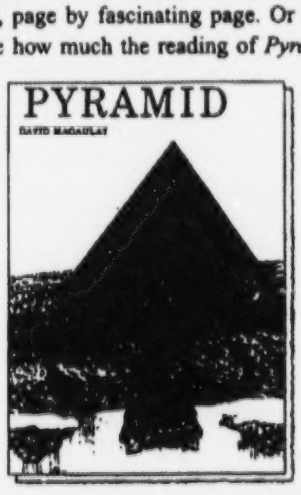
Several years before Russell Crowe reminded us of our fascination with gladiators, Richard Watkins' *Gladiator* dispelled the notion that there was anything romantic about being one. The first known gladiatorial combat in Rome occurred in 264 BC as part of a nobleman's funeral. It caught on to such an extent that by the time of Julius Caesar, huge spectacles featuring extravagant gladiatorial contests were employed to ensure political success. Many of the combatants were captives of the Roman Empire's conquering armies, brought to Rome to be auctioned off in slave markets. Others were criminals or free men, often desperate, looking for a way to earn gold and glory. Watkins brings their world to life.

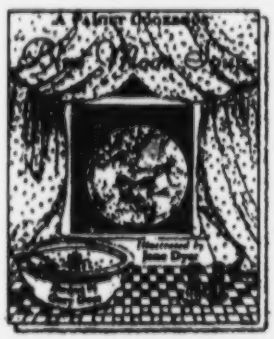
One has only to go to a modern football game, bullfight, or boxing match to recognize that the influence of those ancient days, over 1600 years ago, still exists. *Gladiator* is one of those books you can hand to almost any reader, from age eight and up, and know it will be read with enthusiasm and its excellent black-and-white illustrations studied in detail. In addition, follow-up discussion can lead to insights about the history and sociology of violence in sports.

There are many other books like *Gladiator* that parents and teachers can offer kids to spark interest or encourage a budding passion and also give them a broader view of their own world. The important message is that books are filled with marvelous and useful information and entertainment.

If your family is hooked on the latest "survival" craze, seize the moment and hold it captive while you read Jennifer Armstrong's *The Spirit of Endurance*. Her account of Sir Ernest Shackleton's attempt to lead the first expedition across the Antarctic in 1914 is a true (not staged or contrived for ratings) edge-of-your-seat adventure. When Endurance was trapped in the ice, leaving the crew marooned, they had to attempt daring feats of immense courage, trekking their way through unmapped mountains against overwhelming odds. It took a leader of immense courage to save them all. Armstrong's graphic text is supplemented with original photos and paintings that add another dimension to understanding the drama.

Architect and children's author David Macaulay's work is a perfect example of what we mean when we say informative and entertaining. We cannot begin to count the hours our family has spent poring over the black-and-white detailed drawings of *Castle* as this medieval structure is assembled, page by fascinating page. Or estimate how much the reading of *Pyramid* influenced our children's visit to Egypt. Macaulay's newest contribution to our understanding of construction, *Building Big*, takes us into the lofty world of skyscrapers, bridges, and other massive engineering projects to explain why a certain structure is designed and built in a particular way. His books open up worlds, showing solutions to big challenges one brick at a time.





For kids who'd rather do than read, think about a cookbook or hands-on art guide. Help children realize that attractive nonfiction can be accessible and appealing resources for information. Consider for example, *Blue Moon Soup*, featuring chef Gary Goss' delicious and nutritious collection of soups for four seasons. Such tempting concoctions as "Best Buddy Soup" that combines tomatoes and (yes!) oranges are cunningly illustrated with Jane Dyer's watercolors that capture Goss' secret ingredient, "essence of humor."

And if *Blue Moon Soup* proves a successful appetizer, move on to "more than a cookbook" *The Good Housekeeping Illustrated Children's Cookbook* which gives kids a good start toward independence in the kitchen. Fifty-one recipes are supplemented with other useful information like how to wash lettuce, test for doneness, and handle hot foods. Marianne Zanzarella's instructions are illustrated with Tom Eckerle's photographs. Or sample the possibilities of *Passport on a Plate* that features 100 recipes gleaned from the kitchens of a dozen different countries.

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The guide to a gastronomical tour is Diane Simone Vezza with art provided by Susan Greenstein. The "difficulty rating system" is a useful tool of this multicultural offering. It helps a parent know how much assistance might be needed in the kitchen to accomplish a successful outcome. Parental assistance is not necessarily a draw-

back, however, because cooking is a lovely way to spend quality family time.

Art projects also can begin with inspiration from a well-designed book. Klutz publishers are standouts in the "how to do it" genre. One of their latest is *A Book of Artrageous Projects* which even on its cover (of copper foil to be used for several of the projects), offers activities designed to expose children to a variety of

art experiences. Collage, sculpture, painting and drawing (paints and brush come packaged with the book), weaving, etching, sun printing, designing a coat of arms, illumination, and creating an alphabet font, are among the possibilities.

Drawing for the Artistically Undiscovered is another particular favorite because artist Quentin Blake offers an irreverent but effective approach. To illustrate the philosophy of the book, it is packaged with pencils but no eraser. Blake says there are no mistakes, only sometimes there are bigger successes. It happens occasionally that our perfectionist gifted and talented children get frustrated when things don't come out spectacularly the first time around, and then give up. This book may help to turn that around with its deceptive informality while providing basic and essential drawing lessons. There are lessons on shading, perspective, and drawing the human body. Every page has a drawing tip with illustrated examples, and an invitation for the student to do his own drawing.

There are so many wonderful resources out there for your children to enjoy. A gifted kid in your life may bring many challenges, but also great rewards. Seeing a child's face light up when a particular book sparks interest and enthusiasm is always a special moment. We wish you many such moments.

Author's note:
We would love to have input from you about your children's favorite nonfiction titles. Please e-mail me at jodyshapiro@bigpond.com or drop a note to the editor at 3136 Calle Mariposa, Santa Barbara, CA 93105. We will use some of your suggestions in future columns.

JODY FICKES SHAPIRO is a children's literature consultant and owner of Adventures for Kids children's bookstore in Ventura, CA.

USEFUL AND ENTERTAINING NONFICTION

The Spirit of Endurance
Jennifer Armstrong, 2000, Crown
0-517-80091-8

Drawing for the Artistically Undiscovered
Quentin Blake, 1999, Klutz Press
1-57054-320-8

A Book of Artrageous Projects
2000, Klutz Press
1-57054-185-X

Blue Moon Soup
Gary Goss, 1999, Little Brown
0-316-32991-6

Building Big
David Macaulay, 2000, Houghton Mifflin
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David Macaulay, 1977, Houghton Mifflin
0-395-25784-0, 0-395-32920-5 paper

Pyramid
David Macaulay, 1975, Houghton Mifflin
0-395-21407-6, 0-395-32121-2 paper

Passport on a Plate
Diane Simone Vezza, 1997, Simon & Schuster
0-689-80155-6

Gladiator
Richard Watkins, 1997, Houghton Mifflin
0-395-82656-X, 0-618-07032-X paper

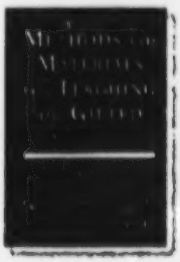
The Good Housekeeping Illustrated Children's Cookbook
Marianne Zanzarella, 2001, Hearst Books
158-816-0114

Methods and Materials for Teaching the Gifted

Edited by Frances A. Karnes & Suzanne M. Bean

(2000) Prufrock Press
hardcover, $57.90, 725 pp
ISBN: 1-882664-58-2

REVIEWED BY ELAINE WIENER



There are 725 pages and it costs $57.90! And you should still run (via the Internet) to Prufrock Press to buy this book. It has everything you always wished you would or could have learned, everything you should have learned, everything you possibly once knew but couldn't hold in your immediate recall, and fine points your professional pride knows you ought to have access to about modern day gifted education .

If you buy this book you can immediately clean out your files, because editors Karnes and Bean have collected, organized, and categorized all the information you always intended to organize and categorize for yourself. In addition, they did so with the help of 24 very impressive contemporary names in the field. Here is a sampling; only a few of the many fine articles can be mentioned in a short review.

Section I: Characteristics and Needs of Gifted Learners

"Gifted and Talented Learners: Many, Varied, Unique, and Diverse" by Sally Reis and Melissa Small includes a compact introduction of attempts to define giftedness, while updating today's variety of gifted students.

"Planning the Learning Environment." by Barbara Hunt and Robert Seney provide lists of characteristics of learning environments and strategies with which to implement them.

Section II: Instructional Planning and Evaluation

"Layering Differentiated Curriculum for the Gifted and Talented" by Sandra Kaplan addresses educators' needs to blend the best of the many models, theories, and philosophies, including core curriculum.

"Evaluating Learner and Program Outcomes in Gifted Education" by Carolyn M. Callahan includes sane, sensible purposes and uses of assessments with many examples.

Other topics in this section are curriculum models, process skills, product development, and writing units.

Section III: Strategies for Best Practice

"Materials and Methods for Teaching Analytical/ Critical Thinking Skills in Gifted Education" by Sandra Parks includes an appendix that is worth the cost of the whole book.

"Developing the Leadership Potential of Gifted Students" by editors Bean and Karnes provides us with important historical and current information for a vital subject.

Other topics in this section are problem based learning, creative thinking, research skills, affective education, independent study, mentorships, co-operative learning, and simulations.

Section IV: Supporting and Enhancing Gifted Programs

Public relations, advocacy, locating and obtaining money, teaching on a shoestring are all topics which provide details and lists which will save you time and teach you how.

The bibliographies, appendices, lists of networks, and teacher resources alone are worth the addition of this book to your library. It would be wise to savor *Methods and Materials For Teaching the Gifted* for its use as a reference, because trying to read straight through can be tedious—though reading a chapter a night might be a fine New Year's resolution. Novice teachers and experienced teachers alike could easily be put off by the sheer abundance of material included. However, the beauty lies in the thought that so many insightful people are looking out for our gifted children.

ELAINE WIENER is Associate Editor for book reviews for Gifted Education Communicator and can be reached at eew@worldnet.att.net.

Staff Development: The Key to Effective Gifted Education Programs

By Reva C. Friedman and Karen B. Rogers

(1998) Joint publication by NAGC & Prufrock Press
www.apa.org
paperback, $19.95,125 pp
ISBN: 1-882664-41-8

REVIEWED BY E. PARNELLI SHARP

Do you need ideas for designing and facilitating staff development for teachers? Are you looking for suggestions for developing informational sessions for parents? How can you evaluate the effectiveness of your current staff development? The co-editors of this book offer valuable information addressing these and other questions relating to staff development in general and staff development specifically for gifted education.

The beginning chapters of the book address staff development in general. Some topics covered are a brief history of staff development, types and formats for staff development, the difference between inservice and staff development, and considerations for adult learners. Much information is provided for staff development as a process. The importance of establishing goals and a vision are presented, as well as ways to identify, collaborate with, and plan for all role groups involved. Methods and sample surveys for following up and evaluating staff development are included. References to such prominent staff development basics as Hall, George, Rutherford's Stages of Concern, Robert Garmston's presentation ideas, and a "Do's and Don'ts" checklist for before, during, and following a staff development activity are available for the reader.

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Staff development for gifted education adds several key components to the general process. A knowledge base of the nature and characteristics of giftedness, strategies for working with gifted students, and the need to work with all educational personnel about giftedness are critical elements to include in staff development for gifted education. Throughout the book, the co-authors weave these elements into the basic tenets of general staff development. Extensive references to resources such as books, journals, websites, and organizations to assist staff developers with research and materials are provided.

In addition, the co-editors include several sample documents. A staff development template is included. Four examples of staff development using this template for different role groups are shared with the reader. Surveys for various groups and functions are located in the appendices.

This book provides basic components of effective staff development programs to anyone developing and presenting staff development for gifted education. Whether you're new as a staff development provider or a veteran, you will find valuable information, ideas, and materials in this book, a joint publication of the National Association for Gifted Children and Prufrock Press.

E. PARNELLI SHARP, is the Coordinator for GATE and Staff Development for the Ventura Unified School District in Ventura, CA.

The Multiple Menu Model: A Practical Guide for Developing Differentiated Curriculum

By Joseph Renzulli, Jann Leppien, and Thomas Hayes

(2000) Creative Learning Press
paperback, $24.95, 132 pp.
ISBN: 093638686x

REVIEWED BY KAREN BUXTON

Teaching is an art with two distinct components: lesson design and lesson implementation. For those for whom the joy of teaching lies in weaving together the fabric of a unit of study, *The Multiple Menu Model: A Practical Guide for Developing Differentiated Curriculum* by Joseph Renzulli, Jann Leppien, and Thomas Hayes, part of the University of Connecticut's GATE think tank, provides valuable support. In about 100 pages, this slim volume presents templates and fully developed sample units of study for:

- Instructional objectives and student activities from listening to judging with criteria
- Instructional strategies from lectures to literature circles
- Instructional sequences to ensure transfer of learning from developing motivation to practical application
- "Artistic modification" or personalizing knowledge from sharing personal experiences to pointing out controversies
- Instructional products from concrete charts to multimedia presentations, and abstract concepts from empathy to acceptance of ambiguity.

Teachers who are familiar with the differentiated principles of depth, complexity, novelty, and acceleration developed by Sandra Kaplan will find that Renzulli's templates provide a scaffolding that assists in designing differentiated, high-end learning experiences.

The authors stress the importance of teacher expertise in a content area, believing that an understanding of the concepts and methodology of a field of study is essential to crafting meaningful units for students that mirror the thinking and activities of professionals in the field such as writers, scientists, or historians. The joy for these teachers and their students is the pursuit of an academic passion in a dispassionate, scholarly (and entirely rewarding) manner.

Ironically—and sadly—the very comprehensive qualities that make the *Multiple Menu Model* so valuable for some teachers also limit its usefulness to other teachers. As one who has presented many workshops on developing differentiated curriculum, I know that many teachers welcome the concept of differentiation, but find themselves unwilling or unable to write units themselves. While constraints of time and the pressure to teach predetermined standards-based units of study contribute to this reluctance, the fact remains that for many teachers the joy of teaching lies not in lesson development but in classroom interactions with students. But the acknowledgment that the *Multiple Menu Model* is not a panacea should not detract from its significant contributions to the literature of differentiation.

KAREN BUXTON is K-12 Program Specialist for Curriculum and Instruction for the San Juan Unified School District in Carmichael, California. She has also been part of the faculty for summer institutes sponsored the California Association for the Gifted.

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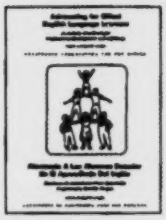
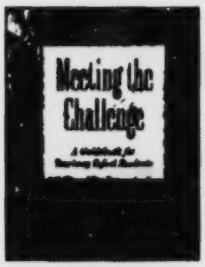


Advocating for Gifted English Language Learners

An Activity Handbook for Professional Development and Self-Study

Item No. P-05 $12.00/copy

This guidebook presents an overview of the gifted English language learner. The activities can be used for inservice or for individual self-study. Text in English and Spanish.



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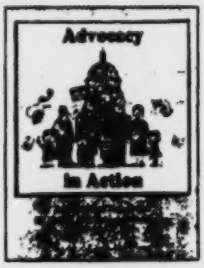
Here's a guidebook to answer teachers' most frequently asked questions about gifted education, plus lists of available resources, an easy-to-use annotated bibliography and CAG's comprehensive glossary.



Advocacy in Action

An Advocacy Handbook for Gifted and Talented Education

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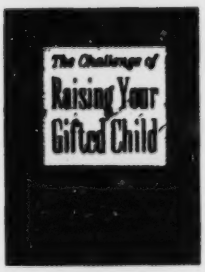

The Challenge of Raising Your Gifted Child

Item No. P-03 $12.00/copy

Here's a guidebook to answer parents' most frequently asked questions concerning gifted children, plus resources, both traditional and electronic, to make parenting easier.

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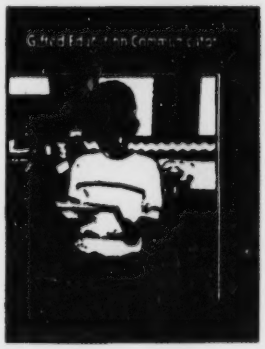

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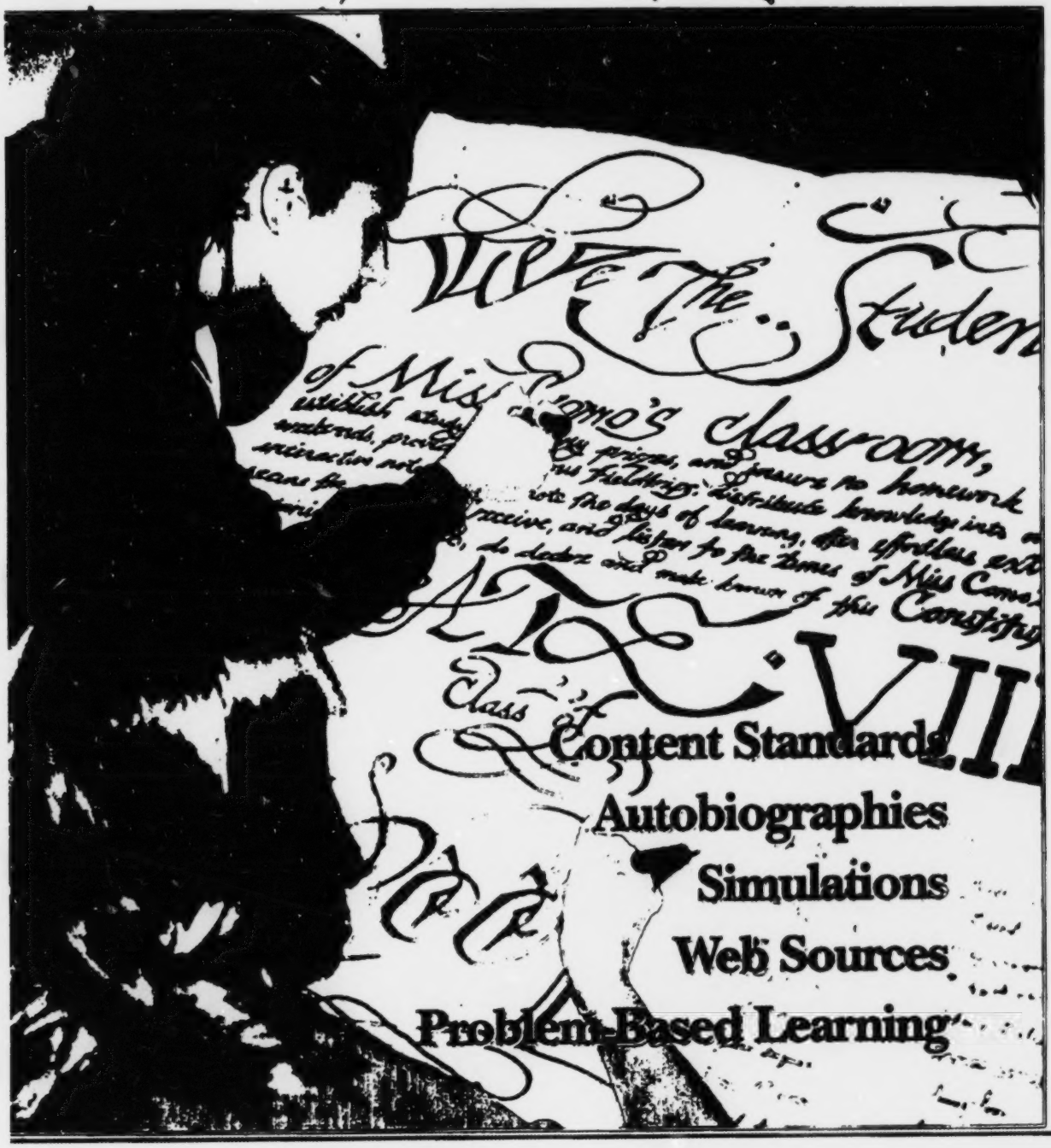

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Gifted Minority Children

Gifted English Language Learners

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Summer (June 2002) - Assessment

Fall (September 2002) - Language Arts

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Glacy Guijo and Loraine Lawton prepare a class declaration in Oxnard, CA
Photo by Geneva Wayne

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CALENDAR OF CONFERENCES

SEPTEMBER 21–23, 2001
Annemarie Roeper Symposium 2001
O'Hare Marriott, Chicago, IL
www.xsrvg.com/roeper/index2.html

SEPTEMBER 26–28, 2001
Mississippi Association for Gifted Children
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Jackson, MS
601-924-0068

SEPTEMBER 30–OCTOBER 2, 2001
Iowa Talented and Gifted Association
Five Seasons Hotel, Cedar Rapids, IA
319-364-2527, www.uiowa.edu/~itag

SEPTEMBER 30–OCTOBER 2, 2001
Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids, MI
734-677-4404, www.geocities.com/ijkaiser_1823

OCTOBER 4–6, 2001
Kansas Association for the Gifted, Talented, & Creative
Capitol Plaza Hotel, Topeka, KS
316-799-2315, www.kgtc.org/conference.htm

OCTOBER 11–12, 2001
Wisconsin Association for Talented & Gifted
Olympia Resort, Oconomowoc, WI
920-991-9177, www.focol.org/ ~watg

OCTOBER 11–13, 2001
Colorado Association for Gifted and Talented
Holiday Inn Southeast, Aurora, CO
303-368-4401

OCTOBER 11–13, 2001
Tennessee Association for the Gifted
Franklin Marriott Hotel & Cool Springs Conference Center, Franklin, TN
615-599-8635

OCTOBER 12–13, 2001
Maryland Coalition for Gifted and Talented Education
Turf Valley Conference Center, Ellicott City, MD
410-313-6800, www.howard.k12.md.us/gpt

OCTOBER 12–13, 2001
New England Conference on Gifted and Talented
Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland, ME
202-873-3380, www.necgt.org

OCTOBER 12–13, 2001
Washington Association of Educators of the Talented & Gifted
Double Tree Inn, Seattle WA
www.waetag.org

OCTOBER 14–16, 2001
Gifted Association of Missouri
Tan-Tar-A Resort, Lake of the Ozarks, MO
573-874-0683, www.mogam.org

OCTOBER 19–20, 2001
Florida Association for the Gifted
St. Petersburg Hilton, St. Petersburg, FL
904-491-4694

OCTOBER 20, 2001
Minnesota Council for Gifted and Talented
O'Shaughnessy Education Center, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul Campus
952-927-9546, www.mcgt.net

OCTOBER 25–27, 2001
AGATE–New York
Marriott at Wolfrod, Albany, NY
www.agateny.org

OCTOBER 26–27, 2001
Society for the Advancement of Gifted Education
Grant MacEwan College, City Centre Campus
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
780-438-4384, www.ucalgary.ca/~gifted.uc

OCTOBER 26–27, 2001
West Virginia Association for Gifted and Talented
Days Inn, Flatwoods, WV
www.geocities.com/wvgifted/page6.html

NOVEMBER 1–3, 2001
Virginia Association for the Gifted
Williamsburg Marriott, Williamsburg, VA
804-365-4551, www.vagifted.org

NOVEMBER 7–11, 2001
National Association for Gifted Children
Cincinnati Convention Center, Hyatt and Regal Hotels, Cincinnati, OH
202-785-4268, www.nagc.org

NOVEMBER 26–29, 2001
South Carolina Consortium for Gifted Education
Charleston, SC
803-796-6111

DECEMBER 5–8, 2001
Texas Association for Gifted and Talented
Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, TX
512-499-8248, www.txgifted.org

FEBRUARY 3–5, 2002
Illinois Association for Gifted Children
Chicago Marriott Downtown, Chicago, IL
847-963-1892, www.iagcgifted.org

FEBRUARY 21–22, 2002
Kentucky Association for Gifted Education
Lexington, KY
270-745-4310, www.wku.edu/Dept/Academic/Education/KAGE

FEBRUARY 21–22, 2002
Nebraska Association for the Gifted
DoubleTree Hotel, Omaha, NE
402-561-6000, www.nebraskagifted.org

FEBRUARY 28–MARCH 1, 2002
Oklahoma Association of Gifted, Creative, & Talented
University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, OK
405-521-4287, http://title3.sde.state.ok.us/gifted/OAGCT.htm

MARCH 1–2, 2002
New Jersey Association for Gifted Children
Princeton Marriott Forrestal Village, Princeton, NJ
609-586-6133, www.njagc.org

MARCH 1–3, 2002
California Association for the Gifted
Wyndham Hotel & Convention Center, Palm Springs, CA
562-789-9933, www.CAGifted.org

If your organization has a state or national event planned, please contact Margaret Gosfield at ***gosfield@home.com*** *to list your information.*

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Like a kid in a candy shop! That's how I felt in preparing this issue of *Gifted Education Communicator* with its focus on social studies. Twenty years of teaching middle school history and geography classes for gifted students made me feel right at home with the topic, and seeking new materials and effective practices, finding researchers and practitioners with important information to share, reconnecting with the California Council for the Social Studies, and making contacts with the National Council for the Social Studies, were sources of much pleasure. Perhaps the biggest treat was opening the spring issue of *Social Education* and finding the lead article coauthored by a former student who's now grown up and with a Ph.D. in history, and whom you will meet in the feature "History Matters."

We are committed to devoting one issue each year to a content area, and our plan is to do that in the fall when most school participants—educators, students, and parents—have a large part of the school year remaining to implement new ideas and materials. When it comes to social studies classes, students are usually grouped heterogeneously in the belief that since the goal of the discipline is to shape exemplary future citizens, students need practice working with all types of people including their school agemates. Therefore, those of us in gifted education must ensure that gifted students receive appropriately differentiated curricula in their daily social studies classes, whether grouped heterogeneously or homogeneously.

We begin our theme feature articles with reminders of why social science is important for gifted students. Senator Jack O'Connell in the California State Legislature is a former high school government teacher; he points out the significance of social science to American democracy in "Wanted: Gifted Students in Social Science." Sandra Kaplan reinforces this theme in "Promoting the Discipline" as she articulates the value of social science in teaching scholarliness, promoting leadership, and developing self-concept and identity.

We wish to thank the National Council for the Social Studies for its collaboration on this issue. It generously gave permission for us to reprint, "History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web," which appeared in the April issue of their professional journal, *Social Education*. In addition, three of their board members prepared articles especially for us. In her article, "Challenges in Teaching Gifted Learners in Social Studies Classes," Margaret Laughlin demonstrates how teachers can implement specific national history content standards in ways appropriate for gifted learners. And classroom teacher Michael Yell shares his methods in "Gifted Education and Social Studies: Engaging All Learners." Finally, Susie Burroughs shares information about "Project Citizen," a national program for encouraging good citizenship in middle school students.

Mindful of our goal of providing practical and useful information for those in the field, we have several additional articles with specific recommendations for classroom use. Jerry Flack suggests ways in which "Creative Autobiography" can fit into social studies classrooms, while Mary Pat Vargas shares the fruits of her labor in designing a project for her students, "Creating Simulations for Social Studies Classrooms: The Lewis and Clark Example." Problem-based learning is presented by Shelagh Gallagher in "Project P-BLISS: An Experiment in Curriculum for Gifted Disadvantaged High School Students," and Susannah Richards guides us in the use of "Mentors in Print: Bringing the Social Sciences to Life With How-to Books."

The very nature of social studies often leads educators—with the help of parents—to incorporate social action activities into the classroom. One such activity takes place annually in Twinsburg, Ohio, where gifted students in Jim Delisle's Project Plus seminars raise money for children at a local hospital through "Coffee for a Cause." We are pleased to share a description of this activity written by student participants Sara Jordan, Chelsea Durdel, Stephen Keller, Brittany Dan, Shannon Suveges, and Ryan Hawkins. Congratulations on work well done.

You will also find a number of sidebars throughout the issue with useful information. Of particular note are the national content standards for the disciplines of civics and government, economics, and geography. We think it is important for all readers, including parents, to have easy access to these standards. We invite you to go to the websites for each of them to see the accompanying backup materials. Due to space limitations we have not included the national history standards, but again urge you to access them on the Internet. Websites for the first three are included with the respective standards; you can find the national history standards at: www.sscnet.ucla.edu/nchs/standards.

Our regular contributors have many interesting things to share with readers in our ongoing departments. In this issue, we introduce a new feature: Felice Kaufmann, gifted education consultant from Bethesda, Maryland interviews an author who will share his or her experiences and insights in gifted education. We've named this department, "In Their Own Words," and Kaufmann starts off with a session with Jerry Flack.

We hope this issue provides information and ideas for all participants in gifted education. Good reading to you! ■

—MARGARET GOSFIELD, Editor

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California Council for the Social Studies

CCSS Mission Statement

CCSS promotes and supports quality social studies education through service, advocacy and leadership development. We are collectively committed to strengthening the teaching of the social studies disciplines through professional development, public awareness and collaboration at local, state and national levels. Our practices demonstrate a pro-active approach to the dynamics of change while maintaining traditions that provide stability and continuity through high standards for educational excellence.

Benefits

Sunburst is the official newsletter of the California Council for the Social Studies and is published four times each year. Most issues are 20 pages in length and provide a wide variety of news about curriculum developments in California, professional growth opportunities (including CCSS and NCSS conferences), organizational news, social studies products, and commentary on the state of social studies in the Golden State. In addition, exemplary lesson plans are published as "Class Acts" in each issue, frequently with useful teaching resources. The "Webwise" column provides valuable suggestions and recommendations on the use of the Internet in social studies classrooms at all grade levels. Receiving *Sunburst* is an automatic benefit of CCSS membership.

The *Social Studies Review*, official journal of the California Council for the Social Studies, is a nationally recognized and very respected history-social science publication. Over 2,400 subscribers enjoy two annual theme-based issues, over 100 pages in length, with "cutting edge" commentary and ideas for classroom teachers, curriculum consultants, and college-university educators. A large number of "special interest" articles, from authors around the country, and a series of regular "review" columns add interest and applicability for classroom teachers, student teachers, community college instructors, instructors of higher education, and anyone with a general interest in the current status of history-social science education. By joining CCSS you to can receive the *Review.*

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Riverside Convention Center
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Conference 2002
"With All Deliberate Speed" Mastering Literacy, Standards and Assessment

To join CCSS and/or conference information,
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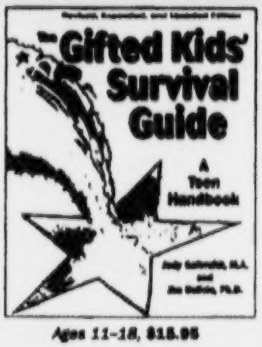
Help for life on the BRIGHT SIDE!



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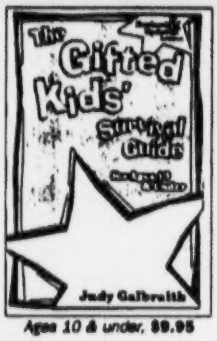

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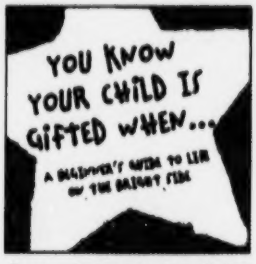

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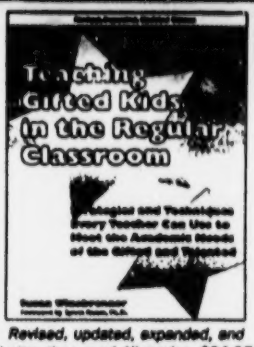

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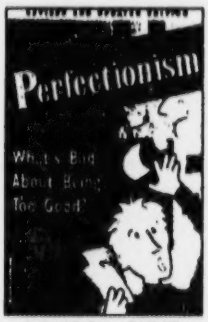

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Standardized Testing: Is it Good for Gifted Students?

BY CATHERINE BARKETT

This is the first part of a two-part series. The first part discusses the issue and gives a national snapshot of the use of standardized tests. The second part focuses on what standardized tests can and cannot measure, and what can be learned from them.

By the end of the 12th grade, it would not be unusual for a gifted student to have taken more than 100 hours of standardized assessments. Every state except Iowa and Nebraska has a statewide testing system to measure student achievement. Many states also have an exam that students must pass in order to graduate from high school. President Bush has proposed a national student assessment program similar to NAEP (National Assessment of Education Progress) which most states already use. The United States participates in the international comparison of student assessment in mathematics and science. In addition to state and national tests, most gifted and talented pupils will take standardized college entrance and Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate exams. But is all this testing good for gifted students? Does it provide us with the information that enables us to make decisions about the effectiveness of programs and the future success of individuals? Or does it waste students' time and needlessly skew the curriculum toward the teaching of unimportant facts and lower-order thinking skills?

Testing systems vary a great deal; some states test only in mathematics and reading, while others test in many more subjects. Many states also include a writing assessment, science and history assessments, and a few also test in areas such as visual and performing arts. Multiple choice format is by far the most popular, but states are becoming increasingly sophisticated in the development of standardized tests that require other types of answers. In order for a test to be considered standardized, the test must be given and scored under the same conditions for all students.

One has only to read the newspapers to understand how controversial standardized testing is. A review of newspapers across the country in June, 2001 yielded the following articles:

Alaska: The *Anchorage Daily News* reports that 66% of students pass the reading portion of the graduation exam, but only 44% pass the mathematics part. Because of poor test scores statewide last year, the legislature has approved a bill to delay from 2002 until 2004 the requirement that students pass the test in order to graduate.

Florida: The *Sun Sentinel* notes that education officials plan to delay toughening the grading scale of the Florida FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Tests). Florida had planned to raise the passing score requirement each year, in the belief that this would encourage continued achievement gains.

Georgia: The *Atlanta Journal* advises the public that the State Education Agency is looking to fill the post of "Director of the Office of Education Accountability." This accountability czar would be responsible for setting the passing scores for various curriculum exams and for grading the 1900 public schools based on their test score results.

Kentucky: Scoring on the General Education Development or GED high school equivalency exam is to be revised, according to the *Courier-Journal*.

Minnesota: The *Minneapolis Star Tribune* reports that "More than twice as many Minnesota high school seniors as last year failed the state basic skills tests given in April—their last chance to meet that graduation requirement before school's out."

Texas: The *Dallas Morning News* reminds readers that while they may be enjoying increases in students' achievement scores this year, in 2003 a tougher version of the state test goes into effect, coupled with a push to end social promotion.

In viewing just a smattering of newspapers across the country, it is easy to see that standardized testing is news everywhere. How these tests are used is a pervasive concern across the states. Proponents and opponents face off on the questions of whether or not so much testing is good for students, and what kinds of tests should be used, if any. Most of the debates center on the effect of

"Most of the debates center on the effect of testing on students in general, with few discussants looking at specific groups of students such as the gifted and talented."

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testing on students in general, with few discussants looking at specific groups of students such as the gifted and talented.

Proponents of standardized testing argue that it provides an objective and fair comparison of student achievement across schools, districts, and states. If students receive individual scores, those scores provide parents with a measure of how their child's achievement compares with that of other students. In some cases, standardized tests can be used to help evaluate whether or not reform efforts have resulted in improved student achievement on standardized tests. They provide a measure of accountability. If a school offers AP mathematics classes, but their students are not passing the AP exams, this raises questions regarding the quality of such classes and how well students are prepared. And to the extent that the standardized test correlates with other measures, such scores can predict how a student would score on other tests or in other situations.

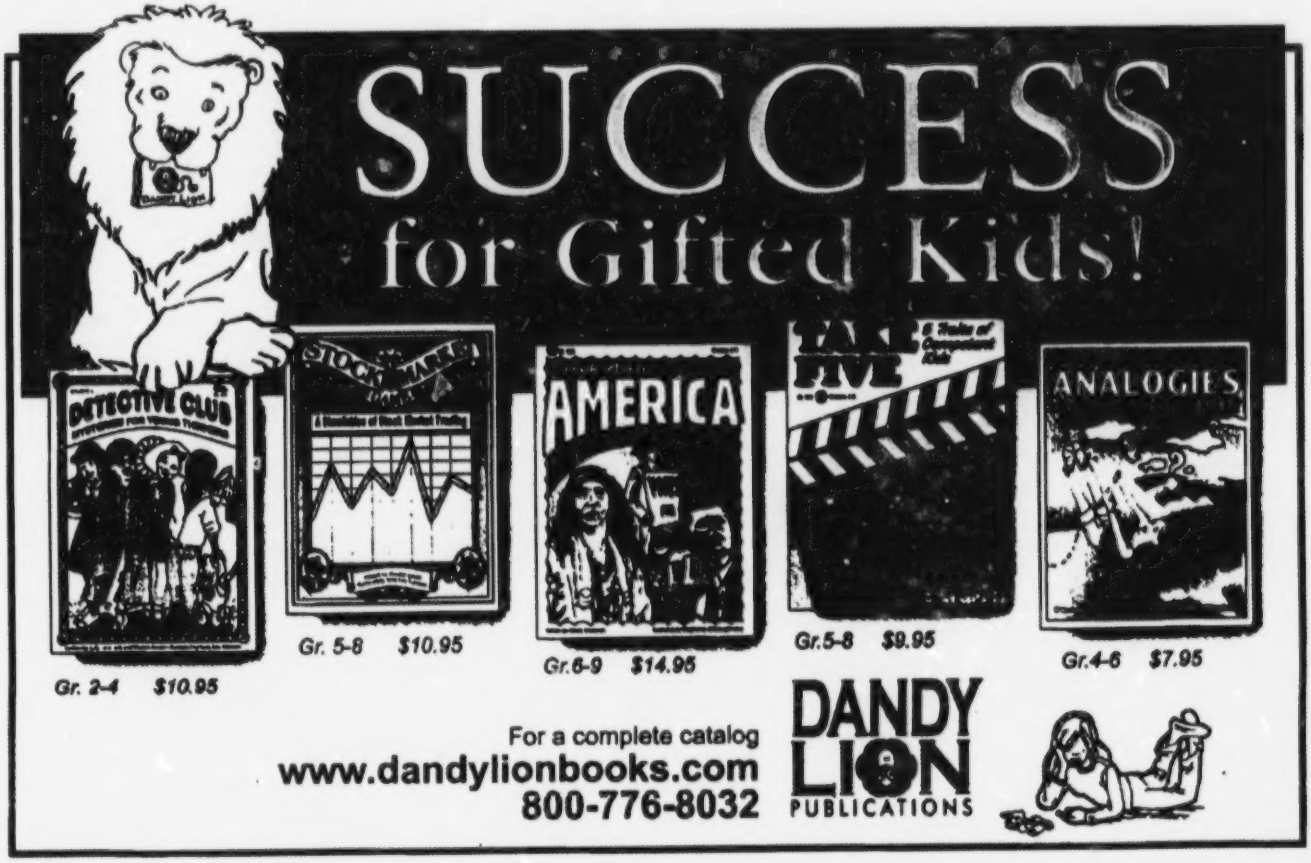
Opponents of standardized testing usually oppose all types of such tests. Multiple choice tests are the most common format used in standardized testing, and they take the brunt of the criticism. Writing assessments in which students are given a writing prompt, a certain amount of time to respond to it, and the responses are scored by a panel of readers, receive much less criticism. These writing assessments can be standardized if they are given under the same conditions for all students, and scored uniformly. Criticism usually centers around the charge that the writing prompts are culturally biased, and that scoring is unreliable.

Critics of standardized multiple choice tests argue that these tests measure only a very small portion of what a student might know, that they tend to emphasize recall of memorized, isolated facts, and that they do not give us a good measure of higher-order thinking skills. Arguments are also made that multiple choice tests may be measuring background knowledge, or test-taking skills, rather than what has been learned in the classroom, and that they take valuable time away from learning. Opponents and proponents agree that multiple choice tests are not designed to measure creativity.

Understanding what standardized tests can and cannot do, and how their results can appropriately be used, may be the key to determining whether or not their benefits outweigh their defects. In the next issue we will examine the following questions:

- Can standardized tests measure creativity or higher-order thinking skills?
- Is there evidence that taking standardized tests improve student learning?
- What reliable information can we get from standardized tests, and how should this information be used? ■

CATHERINE BARKETT is currently California Curriculum Consultant for McDougal Littell, part of Houghton Mifflin.



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"How can I help my child flourish in our existing school environment?"

JULIE GONZALES

It has been 21 years since our family crossed the Colorado state line eager to settle into a community of young families clustered around a neighborhood elementary school in a highly reputable school district. We were convinced this would be the beginning of a wonderful experience for our growing family—which then included a bright-eyed daughter in first grade reading at tenth-grade level, and her baby brother.

The story of our expectations and the mixed results we experienced in the system with our four highly able children (the headcount increased by two in the following years) is a common tale among families of the gifted. When we first began this journey as young parents, we had very little understanding of the issues regarding exceptional children. We were not yet aware of the potential of our children's innate and unique abilities. We did not know the general lack of understanding and professional training in the area of gifted education that awaited us in our children's classrooms and principals' offices. We had no idea there would be little encouragement or support from neighbors and friends as we began to question what was available and what was missing for gifted learners. There were multiple barriers ahead and no functioning support group for parents of gifted children. It was often a lonely and politically uncomfortable journey.

Bloom Where You're Planted

Now, as the third of our four children recently graduated from "the system," I can share a very different perspective that perhaps will give guidance and positive direction for others. Parents, as well as teachers of the gifted, need to know that there is tremendous work, attention, commitment, and immeasurable patience required in raising a gifted child. The family, no matter how small or large, feels the intensity of the current concerns on a daily basis. Yet when common sense prevails, when the focus remains on the child's needs, the anxiety of speaking up and making choices for our children in their school years can result in extraordinary possibilities for high-potential learners.

The following tips offer practical advice that can lead to discovering the best for your child within an existing school system and community.

Work with Teachers

- Begin with information you can validate about your child. Collect and share examples of your child's interests and creativity with the classroom teacher at the beginning of the school year. If you don't tell "the system" about your child, those who are responsible as teachers, counselors, and specialists may never see what you see or know what you know. This information serves as critical documentation and supporting evidence in the process of referral and identification for programming services.

ILLUSTRATION BY JON PONDER

- Establish a respectful communication link with your child's teacher(s). Introduce yourself and ask for a time to share information about your child that will help in the instructional plan; include details such as interests, strengths, special learning needs, and examples of activities your child does at home "for fun" that demonstrate exceptional ability or talent. Ask for suggestions to encourage your child's interests and talent outside the school. Ask what you can do to help in school.
- Be a conduit of continual feedback to the school and the teacher(s) about your child's learning progress from the home perspective. Provide descriptions of your child's attitude about learning, going to school, assignments, responses to trying new things, making mistakes, and peer relationships.
- Be aware of any changes in these or other related areas since they can be an indication of a diminished learning experience and related strain to the social-emotional well-being of the child. Watch for signs of discouragement, disenchantment, or disconnectedness. Don't wait for subtle changes to become festering frustrations.
- Seek common ground with your child's teacher(s). Focus your discussion around the learning needs of your child, not the gifted label. Join in the discussion and design of a learning plan based on your child's unique abilities, interests, and needs. Seek educational strategies with goals that clearly measure both academic and social-emotional growth. Establish a reasonable timeline for assessing whether these goals were met and why. Generate student, teacher, and parent responsibilities to help meet these goals. Focus on optimal performance as a mark of excellence.

Involve Yourself

- Offer your time and personal contributions to the classroom, media, technology, visual and performing arts centers, or gifted resource rooms. Perhaps you can organize field trips, special speakers, or before-and-after school classes that are interest-based or related to the classroom curriculum. Connecting activities might include trips to the local water or utility plants, the various branches and levels of government (justice, legislature, city council), research and technology industries, performing arts

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organizations, farming bureaus, local businesses, media operations, medical, or communication centers.

- Gather a list of local professionals and hobbyists willing to share their interests and expertise as speakers, instructors, or mentors to students with common curiosities. Invite immigrants to share their native culture and language.
- Seek resources and connections that enhance program options for gifted children. Find community and business support for school events and activities that benefit all students, including the gifted and talented.

Build a Community of Giftedness

- Encourage opportunities to learn from the experts and build partnerships for public support. Network on behalf of advanced learners. Participate on school and district committees that focus on academic excellence and accountability. Join local, state, and national organizations that support and advocate for gifted children.
- Attend workshops and conferences that provide enlightened perspectives on the unique needs and programming options to meet the needs of gifted children. Join constructive advocacy efforts to increase support for gifted education at the local, state, and national level. Seek opportunities for purposeful dialogue and positive change with teachers, administrators, and public officials.
- Celebrate excellence and those who support it. Create systemic change through personal integrity, professional respect, and a willingness to find solutions. Know your school and district philosophies and match their vision to the needs of all learners. Gather multiple examples of subgroup test data over time to measure and evaluate academic growth for highly able students.
- Invite policy makers to roundtable discussions on matters of concern. Raise the awareness and common understanding of the issues in order to set a clear path to address the educational needs of the gifted.
- Create informal opportunities for dialogue such as "brownbag" lunches with key educators, parents, and school board members. Build positive working relationships with the gatekeepers in the system. Be respectful of the teaching profession—being a "know-it-all" will get you nowhere. Take time to say "thank you" publicly and encourage your children to express their appreciation to teachers and staff each and every year.

Discovering the best for your child within the school community may also mean discovering the best about you as a parent and advocate for gifted children. ■

JULIE GONZALES is the Parent/Community Liaison for the Office of Gifted and Talented Education in the Cherry Creek School District in Englewood, Colorado. She coordinates statewide advocacy efforts for the Colorado Association for Gifted and Talented and is the Parent Member of the Board of Directors of the National Association for Gifted Children. She has authored and edited several parent handbooks, her most recent being *Excellence through Partnership*.

PUTTING RESOURCES AND CONNECTIONS TO WORK

Early in my parent/school "career" within the system, I created a new position on our PTCO (Parent Teacher Community Organization) board. I called myself the enrichment coordinator. I found the old —very old—file box full of names of neighborhood parents who had at one time volunteered to share their professional experiences and personal hobbies and interests. These people had never been called but had signed the beginning-of-the-year interest forms year after year. I called them and began to build an extraordinary resource file.

Those who came forward had two options. One was to bring their collections, slides, sample products, and career tales to the classroom as a snapshot of the real world as it related to a particular unit of study. Social studies and science units were the easiest to connect. The second option was to create mini-classes before and after school taught by community volunteers in their area of expertise. All students could sign up (first come, first serve) for these classes, but the level of discussion was often more complex and attracted those with the more curious minds. Classes included such topics as ornithology, marine biology, rocketry, architecture, calligraphy, and foreign language.

The foreign language classes were tremendous successes. The demand spread from one neighborhood school to another. Eventually, I had to start a non-profit business in order to create a means for providing materials, program management, teacher recruitment, teacher training, and curriculum written in Spanish, French, and German. There were very few resources available for elementary level second language instruction. The foreign language classes attracted native speakers from the surrounding communities who loved working with young children and were willing to receive some pedagogical training. I built a foreign language resource bank that spread from school to school across the district, state, and beyond. Who would have imagined?

There were obstacles along the way: principals who thought this was overload for the children (the program was always optional); drawing up simple contracts for language teachers (nothing is simple); working with volunteer parent managers (always unpredictable); and dealing with district liability issues for after-school programs. There were always bumps in the road, but the outcomes were overwhelmingly positive. Some of the students in the after-school classes found the subjects so fascinating that volunteer community instructors became future mentors. Often students held on to their interests in subsequent school years, and some became professionals in the same fields. The enormous number of students who had three or more years of foreign language enrichment classes, some in several languages, forced higher levels of language classes to be offered at the middle school level. Early language instruction produced many future fluent speakers of second, third, and sometimes fourth languages. The renewed interest lead to other federal grant projects subsidizing early instruction in Chinese, Japanese, and Russian languages—all offered in communities with significant numbers of immigrant families speaking these languages.

All of this started because a parent of gifted children knew there was a need for enhanced learning experiences.

—Julie Gonzales

Just What is Social Studies?

BY JENNIFER E. BEAVER

As a kid, I didn't give it too much thought. Social studies was what came in a certain book at a certain time. There was a bit of history, some current events, the occasional bit of culture from other lands. Generally, social studies seemed defined more by what it wasn't—math, science, music, art—than by what it was. When the editorial board began to discuss this issue, however, I suddenly needed to know: What is social studies?

What the Experts Say

Fortunately, there are several organizations dedicated to defining, promoting, and studying social studies. The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), for example, provides this definition: "Social studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence."

This still seems a bit vague. What, after all, are social sciences and humanities? They're catchall terms that never quite satisfy. We get closer to the heart of the matter with the NCSS list of 10 social studies themes: culture; people, places, and environments; individuals, groups, and institutions; production, distribution, and consumption; global connections; time, continuity, and change; individual development and identity; power, authority, and governance; science, technology, and society; and civic ideals and practices.

The NCSS further specifies that the disciplines usually included in social studies are: anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology. That still seems like a tremendous amount of stuff to place in one category.

I began to have a better sense of the potential synergy of social studies when I read the NCSS description of active citizens and how they relate to United States history:

- Fannie Lou Hamer was an active citizen when she organized voter registration for Mississippi's Black citizens during the civil rights movement of the 1960s.
- Ken Burns was an active citizen when he created the PBS series on the Civil War to demonstrate the dynamism and relevance of that period of U.S. history.
- High school students were active citizens when they convinced their school to switch from Styrofoam to paper cups after conducting an environmental and cost analysis.

Another organization, the Center for Civic Education, focuses on the civic and democratic principles contained within the social studies framework. The nonprofit educational corporation offers curricular, teacher training, and community-based programs.

What Does This Mean to Me and My Child?

I began to realize that my child had literally been spoon-fed social studies since first grade, when a continuous stream of mystery guests—parents and others willing to share themselves and their knowledge—arrived bearing latkes for Passover and tamales for Cinco de Mayo. Fast forward to fifth grade, where the kids cooked their own apple dumplings and cornbread as part of a full day of Colonial Day activities.

Social studies could be palatable, I realized, with the right mix of ingredients; it didn't have be dry stuff from a mimeographed sheet. "What can I say about Benjamin Franklin?" wailed my son when presented with some terse information about this very interesting patriot. "He's so boring!" Yikes. If Ben sounds boring, we're in trouble.

So what can be done to make social studies relevant and interesting? I vote for more hands-on activities, better discussions, and a little more passion. Most of the social studies worksheets and textbooks I've looked at have all the excitement of watching grass grow. Let's rely a bit more on the wealth of multimedia materials and the imagination and dedication of parents.

Author Vito Perrone, author of the progressive series that begins with *101 Educational Conversations with Your Kindergartner-1st Grader,* suggests such activities for younger children as:

- Looking at maps and having them identify oceans, deserts, swamps, and mountains.
- Asking questions about the seasons
- Looking at photos of children from other parts of the world and asking how he or she knows where they're from
- Asking what scientists, fire fighters, pilots, lawyers, and other professionals do

For older children, Perrone advises:

- Asking questions about homelessness, drugs, and conflict
- Discussing different regions of the United States and their demographics, history, and traditions
- Talking about historical incidents and their relevance

In fact, it would seem that there are "social studies moments" all around us. We had several lively discussions about impeachment when President Clinton was in the White House. And, when it comes to understanding how our government works, my son is an authority on the IRS and the social security tax—courtesy of his two self-employed parents. Social studies may be understandable—and relevant—after all. ■

Resources

Center for Civic Education
5146 Douglas Fir Road
Calabasas, CA 91302-1467
818-591-9321, *www.civiced.org*

Familyeducation.com
www.familyeducation.com/home.html
type "social studies" under parent search; click on "go"

National Council for the Social Studies
8555 Sixteenth St., Suite 500
Silverspring, MD 20910
301-588-1800, *www.ncss.org*

Perrone, V. (1994). *101 Educational Conversations with Your Kindergartner-1st Grader.* New York: Chelsea House Publishers.

Perrone, V. (1994). *101 Educational Conversations with Your 5th Grader.* New York: Chelsea House Publishers.

JENNIFER BEAVER is the Associate Editor for Parent Topics for *Gifted Education Communicator;* she can be reached at jebeaver@aol.com.

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WANTED:
Gifted Students in Social Sciences

BY JACK O'CONNELL

My career in public service started at Oxnard High School in Oxnard, California. While the course catalog called my class "Government" and my students called it "Anarchy," that experience was a critical juncture in my career in public life. It illustrated for me the importance of social science education in the fabric of our democracy.

SEN. JACK O'CONNELL
California State Legislature

Social science is vital to the education of our students, including those who are gifted and talented. While only a handful of our social science students will become historians or economists, the real benefit of social science is the background it gives our students for participation in our democracy.

For some of us, social science has led to a career in public service. I have been fortunate enough to have served in the California legislature since 1982 and that tenure has allowed me to write a number of pieces of legislation which I believe have improved our public schools. I authored the class size reduction laws, the high school exit exam, the beginning teacher salary incentives, and, of course, extension laws for California's gifted and talented education program. Each year I lead the crafting of California's education budget as Chair of the Senate Budget Committee's Subcommittee on Education. In that role I've been able to increase funding for gifted programs around the state.

Clearly, not all of our students will become Senators, or public safety officers, or university professors. For students who eventually enter the private sector, a background in social science is critical in their professional lives as well. Doctors and lawyers need to know how to track changes in state licensing standards. Accountants need to be able to monitor changes in state and federal tax law. Even a 'dot com' millionaire needs to know how to assess the impact of legislation on her company, how to navigate labor laws and product safety standards, and how to be a good corporate citizen in her community.

The basic fabric of our civic life depends in part on the way in which we educate our students for participation in our democracy. The public institutions which we all treasure—our community theaters and public art, our youth recreation programs and senior centers, even our raging city council debates about the fate of a baseball field or stop sign—all hinge on the ability of our communities and public institutions to engage in peaceful public discourse and problem solving. Our public schools, among many other responsibilities, are charged with educating all of our students for participation in that process. If ever we need a reminder of how vital this training is, we need only turn on the evening news and watch one of the innumerable civil wars in other parts of the world.

Social science is just as vital for gifted students as for others in our schools. Indeed, our society needs the skills and talents of our gifted students in solving some of our most vexing problems – from overcrowded school facilities to the energy crisis. We simply cannot afford to let our gifted students skip this vital subject.

Standing in the Senate chamber, with its grand and ornate décor, it is easy to think of the Capitol as the center of our state's democracy. But I would argue that the real heart of our civic life is in the social studies classes of our schools. That is where it all begins. ■

ILLUSTRATION BY KEN VANTON

Not all students will choose a career in public service, but even students who enter the private sector benefit from a solid background in the social sciences.

SENATOR JACK O'CONNELL represents San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties, and western Ventura County. For the last 19 years he has been one of the strongest advocates for public education in the California legislature. He serves on the Advisory Board of the California Association for the Gifted.

Promoting the Discipline

Often an ignored discipline, social studies can teach scholarliness across the disciplines, promote leadership, and develop self-concept and identity

BY SANDRA KAPLAN

The study of many disciplines seems to follow social, political, economic, and academic trends. Some disciplines appear to be highlighted at certain times while others get pushed into obscurity due to societal values, economic conditions, and academic emphasis. Social studies is an example of a discipline that has been both the centerpiece of the curriculum and the "forgotten" or ignored discipline. The contemporary external and internal forces that affect the priority given to each discipline has relegated social studies to an ancillary or "enrichment" discipline; the result is that social studies is viewed as less important by educators than are other disciplines.

"We haven't purchased new social studies texts in five years because all our monies are going into the purchase of literature textbooks," said an elementary teacher.

"Social studies isn't on the test, so we are not teaching it," remarked a principal.

"With the emphasis on learning to read before the third grade and the two-hour block of time designated for reading, who has time to worry about teaching social studies?" asked a first-year primary teacher.

"The faculty decided to rank our subjects. Here's the order we decided to give the disciplines: reading, writing, spelling, math, science, art, physical education, and social studies," commented a veteran teacher.

In addition to the external forces shaping educators' responses to the social studies discipline, the internal forces related to the educational process have contributed to the current position of social studies. The diminished professional opportunities to develop teacher expertise in the area of social studies seriously affects the preparation of educators to teach the discipline. The lack of collegiality focused on discussion about the teaching and learning of social studies affects the degree of excitement and stimulation teachers experience regarding the discipline.

The dearth of activities associated with the teaching and learning of social studies even carries over to the students who subsequently

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distance themselves from the social studies discipline.

"We study the presidents in February. That's our social studies. Oh, we also study holidays," said one fourth grader in response to inquiry about learning social studies.

"I watch the History Channel with my dad to learn social studies," remarked a sixth grader.

"Is social studies what we did during the election? I ran for the senate just like Diane Feinstein did. But, I lost," said a third grader.

"We did a states project. Each of us studied one state and did our report in the shape of the state. I did my report on Hawaii," replied a student.

The theoretical, practical, cognitive, and affective importance of social studies for all students is agreed upon as seen in the literature. However, the value of social studies for gifted students needs to be addressed from several vantage points.

1. If one of the goals for educating gifted students is to develop scholarliness and not just to achieve scholarship, the learning of social studies provides the background for more scholarly literature, science, and mathematics.
2. If the development of social or intellectual leadership is a desired outcome of education for gifted students, the learning of social studies is crucial to understanding the ramifications of leadership and its relationship to personal and social power.
3. If the development of self-concept and identity are vital to realize one's potential, the learning of social studies provides the information supporting the individual and collective identities of gifted students through the study of history.

Educators of the gifted can alter the perceptions and subsequently the value accorded to social studies in today's educational settings by considering the following activities. Each of the activities has been designed to promote the teaching of social studies as an integral part of the daily curriculum.

Compliance

The process of identifying students as gifted carries with it the responsibility to educate them in accordance with their recognized potential. The accepted principles of a differentiated curriculum are used as guides to ensure that the curriculum complies with this educational responsibility.

"Educators of the gifted can alter the perceptions and subsequently the value accorded to social studies in today's educational setting..."

The principles of a differentiated curriculum as originally defined by the National/State Leadership Institute for the Gifted in 1976 can also be used as guides to define the role of social studies in meeting the demands of these principles. For example, one of the principles of differentiation emphasizes "the study of broad-based universal themes, issues, and problems." The social studies discipline is recognized as the area from which universal themes and broad based issues and problems emanate most readily. A social studies curriculum designed for gifted students with funding received from the federal Department of Education (OERI Javits Curriculum T.W.O. grant awarded to the California Association for the Gifted, California Department of Education, and the University of Southern California), has identified three major universal themes for this curriculum: relativism, convergence, and diffusion. These themes are the focal points for investigations in the social sciences in order to answer these questions:

- **Relativism.** What is meant by the concept that descriptions and values of events, people, places, and times are relative to the perceptions and experiences of individuals and groups?
- **Convergence.** How does the point where political, social, technological, psychological, and economic information about something meet, provide greater clarity or new meaning?
- **Diffusion.** What are the contributions or effects of diffusion to the development of society? What factors facilitate or inhibit the diffusion process past, present, and future?

Another example of the use of broad-based themes to facilitate interdisciplinary inquiry is noted in the frames shown below (see Figure 1). They are from a set of lessons designed to facilitate students' comprehension of social studies analogous to several social science disciplinarians: historian, anthropologist, political scientist, geographer, and economist.

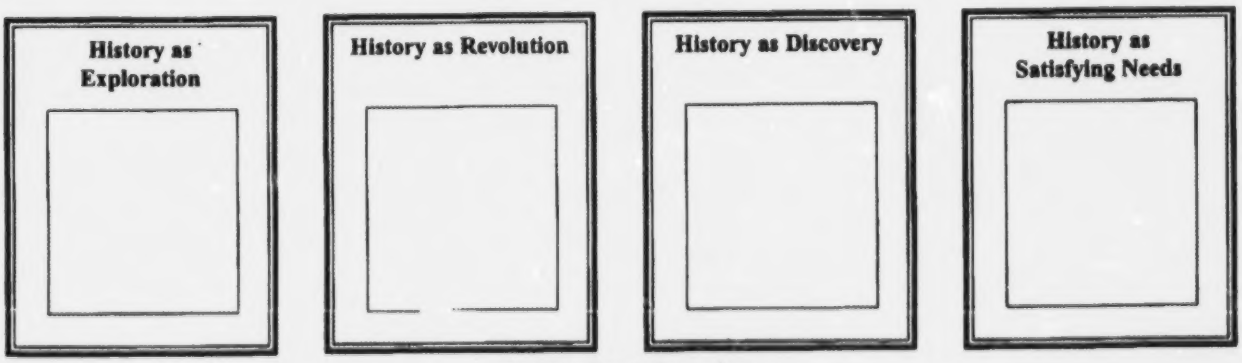

Figure 1. Frame Examples

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Students are instructed to either use these frames as prompts for investigating the topics under study in social studies, or as a means to categorize or organize information gathered about a topic. Students must apply critical thinking skills to substantiate the relevance and validity of the information sorted into the frames.

Alignment

The process of alignment can be used to underscore the priority that should be given to the social studies discipline while at the same time providing teachers with a method to teach social studies without sacrificing the disciplines of language arts and math currently emphasized (see Figure 2).

	Current Disciplinary Emphasis	Alignment to Social Studies
Learning about heroes & heroines in history	Reading literature	Reading biographies, autobiographies, historical fiction
	Learning to read	Reading in the content area
	Writing	Writing as a social scientist: editorials, journals
Character education	Conceptual development	Introducing concepts that connect to literature and mathematics: change, systems, relationships
	Mathematics	Indicating quantitative analysis in social sciences

Figure 2. Alignment

Primary Discipline: Language Arts

Standard: Students will understand and compare the use and importance of figurative and literary speech.

Secondary Discipline: Social Studies

Standard: Students will understand the meaning of the symbols that define the United States as a democracy.

Figure 3. Alignment of language arts and social studies standards

While these examples of alignment seem obvious, teachers often need only to develop an awareness of the options to align the "have to" of curriculum demands with the "can do" of curriculum possibilities in order to excite their interest in teaching social studies. Alignment also provides these educators with solid grounds to justify their involvement with the social studies discipline. Importantly, the suggested areas of alignment do not dissipate but rather reinforce and enrich other disciplines. Perhaps the most significant type of alignment would be relating the social studies standards to the language arts standards (see Figure 3). In this method, both disciplines are taught simultaneously. While the primary discipline could easily be language arts, the secondary discipline could be social studies. It can serve as a means to the end or desired outcome.

The value of a discipline can not be dependent on its relevance to the current educational thrusts. One of the merits of a discipline is its relevance to support and clarify other disciplines. Social studies is a pathway to and from all other disciplines. Our students need to comprehend that interdisciplinarity is not a contrived relationship among disciplines but the natural integration of disciplines that contribute to and reinforce one another. ■

SANDRA KAPLAN, is Clinical Professor at the University of Southern California, and past president of both the California Association for the Gifted and the National Association for Gifted Children.

History Through the Performing Arts BY RON FINK

"It's no secret that if you want your students to remember something, you sing it. Kids remember lyrics, and one way to make history come alive is to have your students act it out." This quote by fifth-grade teacher Jeff Lantos at Marquez Charter School in Los Angeles, is a strong reminder that to teach history and social science without a performing arts component is to miss a crucial avenue into students' brains.

Over the last several years I have seen dozens of classes perform musical plays connected to their history curriculum, and I am always struck by the sheer joyfulness that kids bring to the enterprise. Gifted students especially welcome theater, as it adds a new dimension to their studies. Not only do they absorb a tremendous amount of information, but they learn to work as a team, respect the various talents that each brings and push their imaginations into overdrive. Do the kids always sing well? No, they frequently don't, but they most certainly retain the history that they perform.

Fortunately there are fine materials available for teachers and their gifted students; a small sampling is listed below. And the really good news is that you can be musically timid and still find these tremendously useful.

Performinghistory.com provides:
Miracle in Philadelphia (Constitutional Convention of 1787)
Hello Louisiana (Louis and Clark expedition).
Water and Power (A 15-year-old girl working in a cotton mill in Massachusetts)

Bad Wolf Press has available:
13 Colonies (Colonial American history through the signing of the Bill of Rights)
Gold Dust or Bust (California gold rush)
The Texans: Birth of the Lone Star State (Arrival of Europeans through annexation in 1845)

Sources:

Bad Wolf Press	Performing History
888-827-3661	310-672-1668
www.badwolfpress.com	www.performinghistory.com

CONTENT STANDARDS IN ECONOMICS

STANDARD 1
Productive resources are limited. Therefore, people can not have all the goods and services they want; as a result, they must choose some things and give up others.

STANDARD 2
Effective decision making requires comparing the additional costs of alternatives with the additional benefits. Most choices involve doing a little more or a little less of something; few choices are "all or nothing" decisions.

STANDARD 3
Different methods can be used to allocate goods and services. People acting individually or collectively through government, must choose which methods to use to allocate different kinds of goods and services.

STANDARD 4
People respond predictably to positive and negative incentives.

STANDARD 5
Voluntary exchange occurs only when all participating parties expect to gain. This is true for trade among individuals or organizations within a nation, and usually among individuals or organizations in different nations.

STANDARD 6
When individuals, regions, and nations specialize in what they can produce at the lowest cost and then trade with others, both production and consumption increase.

STANDARD 7
Markets exist when buyers and sellers interact. This interaction determines market prices and thereby allocates scarce goods and services.

STANDARD 8
Prices send signals and provide incentives to buyers and sellers. When supply or demand changes, market prices adjust, affecting incentives.

STANDARD 9
Competition among sellers lowers costs and prices, and encourages producers to produce more of what consumers are willing and able to buy. Competition among buyers increases prices and allocates goods and services to those people who are willing and able to pay the most for them.

STANDARD 10
Institutions evolve in market economies to help individuals and groups accomplish their goals. Banks, labor unions, corporations, legal systems, and not-for-profit organizations are examples of important institutions. A different kind of institution, clearly defined and enforced property rights, is essential to a market economy.

STANDARD 11
Money makes it easier to trade, borrow, save, invest, and compare the value of goods and services.

STANDARD 12
Interest rates, adjusted for inflation, rise and fall to balance the amount saved with the amount borrowed, which affects the allocation of scarce resources between present and future uses.

STANDARD 13
Income for most people is determined by the market value of the productive resources they sell. What workers earn depends, primarily, on the market value of what they produce and how productive they are.

STANDARD 14
Entrepreneurs are people who take the risks of organizing productive resources to make goods and services. Profit is an important incentive that leads entrepreneurs to accept the risks of business failure.

STANDARD 15
Investment in factories, machinery, new technology, and in the health, education, and training of people can raise future standards of living.

STANDARD 16
There is an economic role for government in a market economy whenever the benefits of a government policy outweigh its costs. Governments often provide for national defense, address environmental concerns, define and protect property rights, and attempt to make markets more competitive. Most government policies also redistribute income.

STANDARD 17
Costs of government policies sometimes exceed benefits. This may occur because of incentives facing voters, government officials, and government employees, because of actions by special interest groups that can impose costs on the general public, or because social goals other than economic efficiency are being pursued.

STANDARD 18
A nation's overall levels of income, employment, and prices are determined by the interaction of spending and production decisions made by all households, firms, government agencies, and others in the economy.

STANDARD 19
Unemployment imposes costs on individuals and nations. Unexpected inflation imposes costs on many people and benefits some others because it arbitrarily redistributes purchasing power. Inflation can reduce the rate of growth of national living standards because individuals and organizations use resources to protect themselves against the uncertainty of future prices.

STANDARD 20
Federal government budgetary policy and the Federal Reserve System's monetary policy influence the overall levels of employment, output, and prices.

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www.councilforeconed.org
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Creative Autobiography

Adding a Meaningful Dimension to Social Studies

BY JERRY FLACK

Autobiography: The next thing like living one's life over again.
—Benjamin Franklin

The two most important words in this article are creative and autobiography. Autobiographies and collections of memoirs and self reflection offer students exciting human stories as well as models of good writing and storytelling. Second, ideas are given for autobiographical projects designed to provoke creative responses in gifted students of all ages.

As today's talented youths prepare to enter into the larger world, their parents and teachers want them to be as well armed as possible. Social science teachers have long used biography as a means of illuminating the histories of the leaders of the nation and the world. Biographies allow students to connect historical events with real people, and at the same time, they provide role models of leadership and good citizenship. Autobiographies add to the process by helping students become part of the historical scene as they prepare for their future roles in society.

Autobiography, in its various forms, may be one of the best tools existent to share with gifted students in order to prepare them to meet the creative challenges and opportunities they will encounter the rest of their lives. Autobiography can be more than just an exciting introduction to the lives of writers and artists; it may also be used to help gifted students become more aware of their own creative strengths.

Recognizing and realizing a creative life does require courage. And courage begins with confidence in one's mettle and one's ability to succeed. Wise teachers provide abundant opportunities for gifted students to examine their lives autobiographically, noting and celebrating the things for which they have great love and in which they excel. Young gifted people who discover their passions and their creative strengths feel good about themselves. And those who feel good about themselves develop confidence and orient their talents to creative productivity. Before teachers and parents send young people out into the battlefield of society to face life's tribunals and critics, let them first make each aware of his or her remarkableness, singleness, and uniqueness. Build students' creative confidence through autobiographical experiences.

A word about choice. No student should be expected to complete every project described here. The wise teacher offers choices from which students may select preferences. Of course, teachers may choose one or two projects they want all their students to complete so that there is a shared, common classroom experience. Other teachers may want to make autobiography an all-year experience. Students would then complete many of the activities for an ever-growing autobi-

"Through autobiographies talented students come to appreciate what they have in common with other students and recognize that their differences contribute to the rich diversity of a strong and vibrant society."

ographical portfolio that is complete at year's end. Teachers will also note that some activities are best suited to particular age levels.

Sources of Inspiration

Fortunately, many of the most talented writers, creative artists, and even astronauts have told their own stories in books for children and young adults. There is much that gifted young writers can learn about creativity and problem solving from an ever growing treasury of autobiographies by many of the most popular and esteemed writers and illustrators of children's and young adult literature. Where do writers find their ideas? How do illustrators work? How do the life experiences of creators inform their own works?

Alma Flor Ada, professor of multicultural education at the University of San Francisco and a popular author of numerous children's books, recounts her childhood in Cuba in two memoirs, *Where the Flame Trees Bloom* and *Under the Royal Palms*. Ada was born in the countryside and later raised in the relatively small town of Camaguey. She writes beautifully and poignantly of growing up in an extended family with loving familial bonds. There is joy but there is also tragedy as she loses a beloved uncle in a plane crash. She also learns with a combination of mystery and pride the secret of another uncle, a doctor, who has dedicated his life to caring for lepers. Holidays such as Christmas are opportunities for sharing joy and stories in her family. Readers can easily see how a writer such as Ada learns to draw upon her rich past to create today's fine literature.

One of the most poignant stories is found in *Where the Flame Trees Bloom*. It is World War II, and at school the children greatly anticipate the comic books they have been promised. But the author's joy turns to sadness as she realizes that the comic book is propaganda with the worst possible caricatures of Japanese. The only Japanese person she has ever seen is the ice-cream man who not only looks nothing like the caricatures of Japanese people presented in the comic book, but is moreover, a man whose kindness is legendary in her neighborhood. He has always made sure that even the poorest children, those with no money at all, receive ice cream, and never at the expense of being humiliated for their poverty.

The best things about the stories found in *Where the Flame Trees* and *Under the Royal Palms* are that they are short enough for reading aloud and that the author's use of language is so exquisite. Moreover the stories are wonderful celebrations of family, and accentuate how vital family love and loyalty are, and why they must be valued above any other riches. There is to be found in her mother and father, grandmothers, and aunts and uncles a profound sense of duty to others and kindness and generosity toward all. The author celebrates teachers. She writes eloquently about the teachers who transformed her life. Ada also speaks of how lost and anguished she felt when she had to transfer schools and become a new student among those who had been classmates for years.

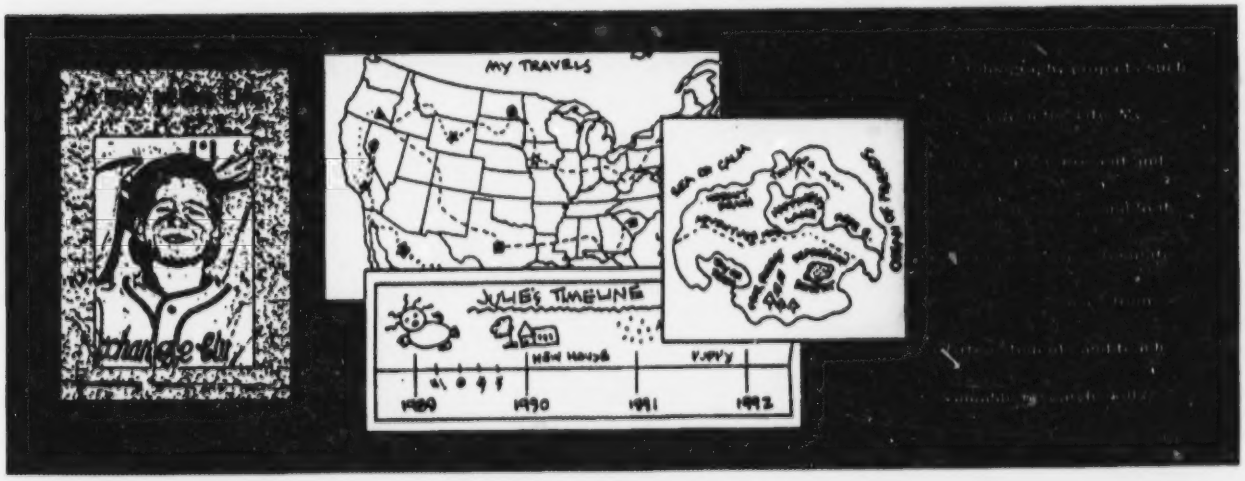
The creator of such childhood marvels as *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* shares both his life story and his illustration techniques in this wonderful omnibus book. Eric Carle had a most unusual childhood and adolescence that will fascinate students. He was born in Syracuse, New York to German immigrant parents, so was an American citizen and attended the public schools in Syracuse through the early grades. In a Syracuse public school he had a remarkable kindergarten teacher who spotted his artistic giftedness and brought it to the attention of his mother.

Unfortunately Eric's parents, homesick for their relatives in Germany, decided to move back to their homeland, where the family became engulfed in Hitler's madness and World War II. After working as a commercial artist in Germany, Carle was able to complete the circle and return to the United States in 1952. Shortly thereafter he was drafted into the U. S. Army, and, ironically, was stationed in Germany.

After marriage, children, and a career in advertising, he found his way into children's books thanks to the talent-spotting of Bill Martin, Jr. who asked him to illustrate a book that was to become a classic, *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* In addition to telling his life story, Carle explores the creative topic, "Where Do Ideas Come From?" and is the subject of a photo essay on how he creates his collage art. This is a wonderful autobiography for students of art, but also for students who want to know how world-shaking events such as World War II impacted the lives of ordinary children. It is an exciting, vibrant memoir.

A Day In The Life

Many authors such as Alma Flor Ada and Eric Carle begin their stories by writing about the times in which they were born. Carle, for example, describes Syracuse, New York in the 1930s. Ask gifted students this question: What is the most important day in your life, but the one about which you know the least? Of course, it is the day each was born. A Day In The Life is a challenging, relevant, and enjoyable project. The task is for



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each student to find out everything he or she can about the day on which each was born. Anyone who is going to take autobiography seriously ought to learn at least a little about the world as it was on that day. So, the project serves as a terrific library research project, though it can also be done on the Internet, where any number of Internet sites provide great resources. They can be located using search terms such as "on this day" and "this day in history."

The History Channel has an especially fine site, "This Day In History" at ***www.historychannel.com/tdih.*** This offers separate pages for automotive, Civil War, cold war, crime, entertainment, literary, old west, technology, Vietnam War, Wall Street, and World War II history for every day of the year. It provides information about historical events and world headlines for every day of at least the past several decades.

Internet sources do not provide local and regional information that students may want to know about their day of birth, such as the names of local politicians, the local weather conditions, and what movies were playing in their hometown cinemas. For this latter information, local newspapers on microfilm at the local library are a treasure chest. Bound volumes of periodicals such as *Time, Sports Illustrated,* and *Seventeen* are also filled with valuable information. Most libraries have reference books such as "A Book of Days" (several reference companies produce such a volume with varying titles) which will provide information about every day of the year, including February 29, throughout recorded history. The births and deaths of famous people for any given day, as well as the great historical events are shared. Deaths of the famous on each day are also listed.

The following questions may guide students in searching their birth days:

- What headlines dominated the news?
- What were the best-selling stocks in the stock market?
- Who was president? governor? mayor?
- What were the weather conditions?
- What were the most popular movies, books, songs?
- What was the average cost of an apartment rental?
- How much did a new car cost?
- Choose five items from the grocery store ads and list their prices.
- What projections were included in the horoscope column?
- Was any special sports event in progress? (World Series, Super Bowl)
- What was the most exciting thing in the state or regional news?
- What great historical events occurred on the day of the year you were born?
- What famous people were born throughout history on your birthday?

An added benefit is that students can improve interviewing skills with this project as they develop questions to ask their mothers, fathers, and grandparents about their

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IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Welcome to "In Their Own Words," a series designed to inspire, encourage and intrigue readers in these "tough times." In this feature we will provide first person accounts of experiences, people, and ideas that have captivated and sustained leaders in the field of gifted child education in hopes of encouraging you to reflect upon the same. This column is under the direction of Felice Kaufmann, Gifted Education Consultant from Bethesda, MD. We hear first from Jerry Flack, Professor of Education and President's Teaching Scholar at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs.

Jerry Flack

I first became engaged in the education of the gifted in a junior high school where I taught English and drama. I had never heard of "gifted education" but my principal had, and he asked me to create the school's first program for gifted students. Upon reflection, we had several positive things going for us. We were a school system under federal court-ordered bussing so there was never any question that we would have a program that was racially balanced. Also, we did not have to agonize over quotas or anything such as that. We just did what we believed to be right.

I fell in love with the field for at least two reasons. I loved the students and marveled at the creativity and productivity they demonstrated. I also loved the fact that I never had a discipline problem. The second cause for my love affair was all the fun I had creating projects for these young people. It was the most creative teaching I have ever done.

I did not have a single gifted education textbook and I had never attended a workshop or taken a college course about teaching gifted children, but together, the students and I learned a lot about gifted child education. That first year with gifted students was probably my best and certainly my favorite year of teaching.

I think the biggest frustration I have experienced is one shared by people all over the nation. That is the so-called ebb and flow of gifted child education. The good years with money available to schools for programs for the gifted are energizing, but it seems that just when things are running successfully, we have budget cuts, personnel and priorities change, and gifted child education is back at the bottom of the heap.

I believe the most exciting things happening in the education of gifted students right now are the new conceptions of intelligence and the new developments in curriculum differentiation. I find Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences theory especially exciting because Gardner causes us to seek giftedness in areas the field has not often explored (e.g., the naturalist intelligence). Carol Ann Tomlinson, Sandra Kaplan, Joyce VanTassel-Baska and others are providing valuable curriculum frameworks that make sense and also make gifted child education easily defensible.

I really thrive on the interactions I have with my colleagues in the Creativity Division of NAGC. I think it is important for teachers, at all levels, from kindergarten to graduate school, to have colleagues with whom they can exchange ideas and seek advice. I find people in our field to be remarkably willing to share.

I have sometimes described the education of gifted and talented students as the Research and Development Department of general education. So many features of gifted programs such as cluster grouping, independent study, future problem solving, and differentiated education plans evolved from programs for gifted and talented students. Our field keeps developing new ideas and plans that are ultimately adopted by the larger mainstream. I believe that is something of which to be very proud.

—Felice Kaufmann

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Challenges in Teaching Gifted Learners in Social Studies Classes

BY MARGARET A. LAUGHLIN

The highest function of the teacher consists not so much in imparting knowledge as in stimulating the pupil in its love and pursuit.

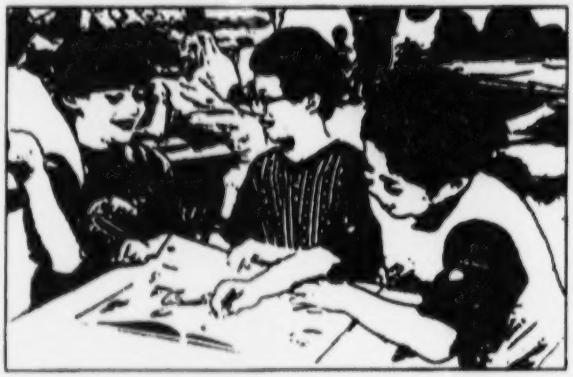
—Henri Frederic Amiel
(1821-1881), Swiss philosopher

Throughout history the education of gifted young people has been a challenge to society. For example, in ancient Sparta military skills were valued, while in Athens, upper class males attended private schools for both academic and physical fitness. Plato, however, accepted both females and males on the basis of their intelligence and physical stamina rather than on family social position. The Romans reserved the opportunity for higher education for males although at times some females were included. For example, Cornelia, the mother of the Roman statesmen Gaius and Tiberius Gracchus was offered education. During the Renaissance, Europe recognized and rewarded gifted men of the arts such as Michelangelo, da Vinci, Boccacio, Bernini, and Dante, among others (Colangelo & Davis, 1991).

China, as early as the Tang Dynasty (618 BC), brought child prodigies to the imperial palace where their gifts were nurtured. The Chinese leaders realized that even the most gifted of young people would not develop to their potential without special training. This is also true today in China and elsewhere as talented young people often receive specialized training in athletics and the arts. Sumerian children during the Tokugama period in Japan (1604-1868) received intellectual training as well as training in the martial arts. Poor children were trained in loyalty, obedience, and diligence to serve the government (Tsuin-chen, 1961).

In the United States, both historically and at present with a few exceptions, interest in gifted and talented young people has waxed and waned. There was a resurgence of interest in gifted and talented education with the launching of Sputnik in 1957; but this interest lasted only about five years when the focus of attention shifted to serving the disabled and disadvantaged in the "War on Poverty" programs as a part of the Great Society movement. Interest in gifted programs today is high among parents of gifted and talented children and others who are committed to educating these youth to their full potential.

A continuing question is: "How can teachers challenge gifted students to excel in their academic learning and meet their intellectual and other needs both now and in the future?" Curriculum choices and instructional activities to meet their intellectual capacities do not just happen; they must be well planned in advance to meet student needs in both the affective and cognitive domains. Students must engage in activities that require them to work primarily at the higher cognitive levels of Bloom's taxonomy: analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Swissinger, 1985). The planning of curriculum content and the selection of instructional strategies are complex, dynamic, and offer special challenges to teachers. There is a need to develop an expanding knowledge base in gifted education.



Because social studies classes are often heterogeneous, students have the opportunity to develop skills for future adult living in a complex society

Historically, there is no common definition of what it means to be gifted. Definitions of giftedness respond to challenges in philosophies and theories of giftedness. They are based on characteristics of learners, educational approaches, research, and changes in the global community such as technology development, demographic changes, urbanization, and cultural diversity among others. Often giftedness refers to students who perform at high levels of intellectual, creative, and academic skills and/or exhibit leadership competencies. The latter may be embedded quietly into the curriculum. Many gifted students perform well in the visual and performing arts that heighten sensitivity and creatively. The arts also offer emotional outlets and other mediums of expression for talented learners (Seeley, 1989).

These notions recognize that students identified as gifted need to have experiences and opportunities which extend beyond the walls of the regular classroom both in curriculum content and instructional strategies. As teachers develop curriculum, attention needs to be given to the overall goals and objectives which should be reasonably broad rather than narrow. Most often the regular classroom instruction fails to challenge gifted students to their full capacity for learning. Ideally, curriculum content to promote integrated learning includes adjustment for differentiation, thinking skills at various levels, and exploration of universally accepted moral, ethical, and spiritual values (Ehrlich, 1983, 220).

While there are many instructional approaches used to meet the needs of gifted students such as pull-outs, acceleration, curriculum compacting, leadership activities, and numerous others, gifted children often enjoy engaging in developing their personal interests in order to use and expand their creative abilities. While gifted learners often prefer to work alone, it is important they have opportunities to interact with classmates and others in a range of group learning activities. A balance of instructional approaches is important. Several starter activities are suggested here to offer teachers a

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beginning point for developing curriculum content and selecting instructional strategies. Of course, there are many more activities and content areas that could be used when working with talented learners.

It should be noted that often social studies classes are not tracked but students are grouped heterogeneously on principle. Since students of various talents and interests will need to work, recreate, and live with others in the larger community, they should have the opportunity while in school to develop skills and proficiencies for successful adult living in a complex society after their school years have been completed. The instructional activities suggested may be adapted for use as needed in a regular classroom or extended for brighter students as appropriate.

While true for most if not all content areas, this is especially true for social studies. For social studies teachers this challenge is especially great since the major overall goal of most social studies programs focuses on the development of citizenship for a democracy and the development of skills for effective citizenship responsibilities and practices in a global and ever changing political, social, cultural, and economic context.

National Social Studies Standards

Social studies teachers can begin by examining the social studies curriculum standards developed by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS). The social studies standards, Expectations of Excellence (1994), have identified ten standards and related performance expectations: seven discipline and three interdisciplinary standards. They address three instructional levels: early grades, middle grades, and high school. They are as follows:

I. Culture (anthropology)
II. Time, Continuity, and Change (history)
III. Places, People, and Environment (geography)
IV. Individual Development and Identity (psychology)
V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions (sociology)
VI. Power, Authority, and Governance (political science)
VII. Production, Distribution, and Consumption (economics)
VIII. Science, Technology, and Society (interdisciplinary)
IX. Global Connections (interdisciplinary)
X. Civil Ideals and Practices (interdisciplinary)

In addition, social science discipline-specific standards have been developed for civics (National Standards for Civics and Government, 1994); economics (Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics, 1997); geography (Geography for Life: National Geography Standards, 1994); and history (National Standards for History, 1996). The NCSS standards should be viewed as overarching and most social studies teachers should be at home in using the NCSS standards and the standards in their discipline speciality in their planning of curriculum content and selecting instructional strategies for gifted and talented students.

Three of the NCSS standards—one for each of the various grades levels—are used as examples for suggested starter-learning activities. Examples of possible social studies content and starter activities for a given standard are described. Teachers are encouraged to develop these and other instructional activities appropriate for their gifted students and specific teaching situations. State and local district standards and mandates should not be ignored in planning for gifted students since state assessment expectations are usually based on state and district standards and benchmarks.

See Challenges of Teaching Social Studies, 53

NATIONAL STANDARDS

National Standards for Civics and Government

K-4 CONTENT STANDARDS

I. What is Government and What Should It Do?
   A. What is government?
   B. Where do people in government get the authority to make, apply, and enforce rules and laws and manage disputes about them?
   C. Why is government necessary?
   D. What are some of the most important things governments do?
   E. What are the purposes of rules and laws?
   F. How can you evaluate rules and laws?
   G. What are the differences between limited and unlimited governments?
   H. Why is it important to limit the power of government?

II. What are the Basic Values and Principles of American Democracy?
   A. What are the most important values and principles of American democracy?
   B. What are some important beliefs Americans have about themselves and their government?
   C. Why is it important for Americans to share certain values, principles, and beliefs?
   D. What are the benefits of diversity in the United States?
   E. How should conflicts about diversity be prevented or managed?
   F. How can people work together to promote the values and principles of American democracy?

III. How Does the Government Established by the Constitution Embody the Purposes, Values, and Principles of American Democracy?
   A. What is the United States Constitution and why is it important?
   B. What does the national government do and how does it protect individual rights and promote the common good?
   C. What are the major responsibilities of state governments?
   D. What are the major responsibilities of local governments?
   E. Who represents you in the legislative and executive branches of your local, state, and national governments?

IV. What is the Relationship of the United States to Other Nations and to World Affairs?
   A. How is the world divided into nations?
   B. How do nations interact with one another?

V. What are the Roles of the Citizen in American Democracy?
   A. What does it mean to be a citizen of the United States?
   B. How does a person become a citizen?
   C. What are important rights in the United States?
   D. What are important responsibilities of Americans?

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E. What dispositions or traits of character are important to the preservation and improvement of American democracy?
F. How can Americans participate in their government?
G. What is the importance of political leadership and public service?
H. How should Americans select leaders?

5–8 CONTENT STANDARDS

I. What are Civic Life, Politics, and Government?
A. What is civic life? What is politics? What is government? Why are government and politics necessary? What purposes should government serve?
B. What are the essential characteristics of limited and unlimited government?
C. What are the nature and purposes of constitutions?
D. What are alternative ways of organizing constitutional governments?

II. What are the Foundations of the American Political System?
A. What is the American idea of constitutional government?
B. What are the distinctive characteristics of American society?
C. What is American political culture?
D. What values and principles are basic to American constitutional democracy?

III. How Does the Government Established by the Constitution Embody the Purposes, Values, and Principles of American Democracy?
A. How are power and responsibility distributed, shared, and limited in the government established by the United States Constitution?
B. What does the national government do?
C. How are state and local governments organized and what do they do?
D. Who represents you in local, state, and national governments?
E. What is the place of law in the American constitutional system?
F. How does the American political system provide for choice and opportunities for participation?

IV. What is the Relationship of the United States to Other Nations and to World Affairs?
A. How is the world organized politically?
B. How has the United States influenced other nations and how have other nations influenced American politics and society?

V. What are the Roles of the Citizen in American Democracy?
A. What is citizenship?
B. What are the rights of citizens?
C. What are the responsibilities of citizens?
D. What dispositions or traits of character are important to the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy?
E. How can citizens take part in civic life?

9-12 CONTENT STANDARDS

I. What are Civic Life, Politics, and Government?
A. What is civic life? What is politics? What is government? Why are government and politics necessary? What purposes should government serve?
B. What are the essential characteristics of limited and unlimited government?
C. What are the nature and purposes of constitutions?
D. What are alternative ways of organizing constitutional governments?

II. What are the Foundations of the American Political System?
A. What is the American idea of constitutional government?
B. What are the distinctive characteristics of American society?
C. What is American political culture?
D. What values and principles are basic to American constitutional democracy?

III. How Does the Government Established by the Constitution Embody the Purposes, Values, and Principles of American Democracy?
A. How are power and responsibility distributed, shared, and limited in the government established by the United States Constitution?
B. How is the national government organized and what does it do?
C. How are state and local governments organized and what do they do?
D. What is the place of law in the American constitutional system?
E. How does the American political system provide for choice and opportunities for participation?

IV. What is the Relationship of the United States to Other Nations and to World Affairs?
A. How is the world organized politically?
B. How do the domestic politics and constitutional principles of the United States affect its relations with the world?
C. How has the United States influenced other nations, and how have other nations influenced American politics and society?

V. What are the Roles of the Citizen in American Democracy?
A. What is citizenship?
B. What are the rights of citizens?
C. What are the responsibilities of citizens?
D. What civic dispositions or traits of private and public character are important to the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy?
E. How can citizens take part in civic life?

Source:

Center for Civic Education

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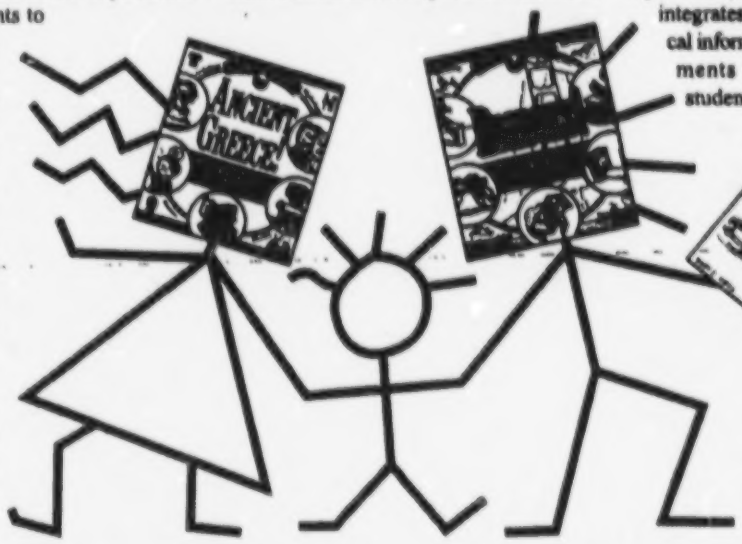
MENTORS IN PRINT

Bringing the Social Sciences to Life With How-to Books

BY SUSANNAH RICHARDS

The wealth of print materials available today makes it possible to find books that discuss the history of suspension bridges, books that contain directions for building one, and books that provide both. In other words, how-to books for the social sciences are much more than cookbooks with procedural steps for completing a set recipe; these books include background content information while providing guidance for hands-on experiences that encourage students to take an active role in their learning. Today's how-to books are plentiful, accessible, accurate, affordable, inviting, and well designed. They act as both teaching tools and references that open up new worlds and help students acquire new skills.



"Books, although not as personable as living people, may fill some of the roles of mentors"

Given the diversity in the field of social science as well as the wide variety of student interests, it is sometimes difficult for teachers and parents to create appropriate individual learning environments; therefore, it is necessary to look for alternative ways to mentor students in their areas of interest. One way to partially fill the void is by helping students connect with resources that enable them to acquire the necessary skills required by members of a given field. Books, although not as personable as living people, may fill some of the roles of mentors. In particular, how-to books can fill a niche by acting as mentors in print, providing students with both the necessary background information and skill development to accomplish a goal or complete a project.

Each social science discipline has its own set of content information and methodological skills. While the content may differ from discipline to discipline, some methodological skills are fundamental to most of them, such as the ability to communicate effectively or to access information. Other how-to skills may be more discipline-specific such as a how to cross-examine a witness in a trial or how to read microscopic slides. A strong how-to book will address both general skills and those more specific to the field.

There are three types of books that can be viewed as how-to books: 1) books that inform; 2) books that teach procedural knowledge, and 3) books that ignite an interest. How-to books can be thought of as resources that allow students to pursue independent investigations because they provide students with the "knowledge-how" skills (Renzulli and Reis, 1997). These books provide students with the needed skills to take their ideas and transform them into products or pursue a particular goal. They also provide a way for students to acquire the "knowledge-how" skills that will enable them to pursue further investigations in that field (Renzulli, Leppien, and Hays, 2000). These might include procedural skills such as how to develop surveys, collect, and interpret data. In addition, how-to books may be able to stimulate an interest in a particular social science area such as archaeology as a result of students drawing logical conclusions about past human life and activities.

For example, *The Civil Rights Movement for Kids* (Turck, 2000) is a how-to book that integrates an enormous amount of historical information about the civil rights movements with hands-on activities for students to increase their understanding of the movement. The how-to portion of the book outlines various activities for students to learn about the many dimensions of the civil rights movement. The activities are diverse and well constructed, and include the steps to conduct a survey, create symbols to illustrate beliefs, participate in a food drive, and make gumbo, a Southern recipe that the fighters might have eaten. More importantly, how-to books like this provide an opportunity for teachers and parents to guide children in constructing meaning as a result of their active involvement in learning.

How-to books lend themselves to a variety of teaching situations. For example, *Ancient Greece! 40 Hands-on Activities to Experience this Wondrous Age* (Hart and Mandell, 1998), would be ideal to use as a complete learning center. *Playing the Market* (Isaacson, 2000) could be given to a student who wants to learn more about how the stock market works. Students working on a History Day project could conduct their own research project using *Research Comes*

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Alive! A Guidebook for Conducting Original Research with Middle and High School Students (Schack and Starko, 1998).

Available resources for educators and parents can be found by searching the library, bookstore or Internet. Another great way to find great how-to books is by asking people in the field what they use. Once you locate potential materials, it is necessary to determine which books best meet student needs. The list in the sidebar provides criteria that define an exceptional how-to book. While many of these questions cannot be applied to every book, they can help educators, parents, and students evaluate the value of a particular how-to book.

Having a wealth of available how-to books allows educators and parents to take advantage of the teachable moment when a child expresses an interest in history or in any area of the social sciences. These resources make it possible to provide students with the skills they need to seize the opportunity and pursue the development of a product in a manner similar to that of a practicing professional. These how-to books offer students a chance to identify a problem and make a difference in their community, to learn about the legal system while testing their prowess in a mock trial, and to interpret data from a survey they designed, distributed and collected.

The remainder of this article lists some of the exceptional examples from the wonderful world of how-to books to help mentor students pursuing social science-related projects. Bookstores and catalogs such Creative Learning Press (www.creativelearningpress.com) carry a variety of mentors in print. When searching, remember that many of the mentors in print will be shelved within a specific discipline. There are many additional how-to books for the social sciences, however, this list is limited to books that are currently in print.

"A strong how-to book will address both general skills and those more specific to the field."

Research Skills
Chi Square, Pie Charts and Me
S. Baum, R. Gable, & K. List
1998, Royal Fireworks Press
For grades 4–12, this hands-on guide outlines the research process, types of research, management plans, presentation of studies, and statistical techniques for students. This is a fabulous resource for adults to use to teach children how to be researchers.

Like It Was: A Complete Guide to Writing Oral History
S. C. Brown
2000, Teachers and Writers
For grades 6–12, the author's history of the civil rights movement serves as a backdrop to this guidebook. Clear directions are included for using a recorder, conducting an interview, transcribing the recording, and developing products such as short articles or full-length biographies.

A Student's Guide to Conducting Social Science Research
B. Bunker, H. Pearlson, & J. Schulz
2000, Creative Learning Press
This book provides students in grades 6-12 with hands-on activities for data-gathering techniques. The authors discuss the relationship between research and life experiences while providing a nine-step approach to research. Beginning with deciding what to research and concluding with ideas for future investigation, each section takes students on a step-by-step exploration of how to answer a research question.

Research Comes Alive! A Guidebook for Conducting Original Research with Middle and High School Students
G. M. Schack, & A. J. Starko
1998, Creative Learning Press
For students in grades 7-12 and the companion to *Looking for Data in All the Right Places* (Starko and Schack, 1992), this is a comprehensive guide to conducting research with middle and high school students. The authors cover how to develop a research question, different types of research, different types of data gathering techniques, techniques for analyzing data, and outlets for sharing information.

CHOOSING EXEMPLARY HOW-TO BOOKS

What makes this author a credible source to write about the topic?

Is the book current? Note the copyright date.

Does the author note any prior knowledge needed by the reader?

Can the reader learn about specialized tasks related to the field of interest?

Does the author include accurate background information?

Does the book provide comprehensive coverage of the topic?

Does the book provide ideas and activities for future exploration?

Does the author use age-appropriate language and instructions that are easy to follow? Are the instructions presented in a logical format?

Does the book address both the content and process skills related to the field?

Does the author use real-life examples and stories to illustrate certain points?

Does the author include an up-to-date bibliography and list of related resources?

Does the book include a glossary of terms, index, and table of contents?

Does the book include informative illustrations, photos, and charts that help to clarify the described process?

Is the book organized in such a way that learning can occur by reading a part of the book rather than the whole thing?

Note: These criteria were adapted and elaborated from a list that appeared in Briatico, D. (1999, December). Finding the best how-to books for kids. *Parenting for High Potential*, p. 24-26.

—*Susannah Richards*

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History Exploration

Pyramids! 50 Hands-on Activities to Experience Ancient Egypt
A. Hart & P. Mandell
1997, Williamson Publishing

Ancient Greece! 40 Hands-on Activities to Experience this Wondrous Age
A. Hart & P. Mandell
1999, Williamson Publishing

Knights & Castles! 50 Hands-on Activities to Experience the Middle Ages
A. Hart & P. Mandell
1998, Williamson Publishing

These Kaleidoscope Kids books for ages 6–12 provide dozens of activities for students to discover and experience different historical time periods. Each book includes cookbook directions for activities such as making a catapult in *Knight and Castles* while also inviting students to ponder larger issues such as the Egyptian origins for many of the cures that doctors still use today. Integrated throughout each book are historical facts and pieces of trivia that kids find both important and interesting.

Civil War for Kids: A History with 21 Activities
J. Herbert
2000, Chicago Review Press

Lewis and Clark for Kids: Their Journey of Discovery with 21 Activities
J. Herber
2000, Chicago Review Press

Targeted for students ages 9 and up, both of these books bring different aspects of history to life with accurate facts, anecdotes, and time lines. They include easy to follow directions for activities such as learning military signals used in the Civil War, and reading wigwag codes or making moccasins and tracking animals as did members of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Wild West Days: Discover the Past with Fun Projects, Games, Activities and Recipes
D. King
1998, John Wiley

Designed for students ages 8–12 and part of the American Kids in History Series that includes the Civil War Days, Pioneer Days, and Colonial Days, this book includes dozens of hands-on projects and activities to help students learn about the Wild West. To set the stage for the hands-on portion of the book, there is an introduction to the time period in which we meet the Thayer Family and their 12-year-old son Tom, his 11-year-old sister Amy, and their 6-year-old brother Tad. The activities in the book are organized by season, and include both the how-to and background for making a lariat, keeping a pioneer diary, measuring distance, and using authentic recipes of the times. Additional assets are the glossary of terms, bibliography, and index.

The Civil Rights Movement for Kids: A History with 21 Activities
M. C. Turck
2000, Chicago Review Press

An amazing introduction and exploration of the civil rights movement for kids ages 9 and up, this book provides a wealth of information about the movement along with a wide variety of suggested learning experiences that include organizing a workshop on nonviolence, staging a lunch counter play, and making buttons to express oneself. The book concludes with the complete text of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, The Voting Rights Act of 1965, and suggested resources and children's books on civil rights.

Service Opportunities

The Kid's Guide to Service Projects
B. Lewis
1995, Free Spirit Publishing

This book for students in grades 5–7 provides ideas for simple activities to large-scale projects. It begins with an outline of the criteria for identifying a successful service project, and concludes with an outline of the how-to steps for exploring and implementing the project. The author provides descriptions of over 500 service ideas organized around areas of interests and needs for numerous topics including animals, fighting crime, literacy, politics and government, and hunger.

The Kid's Guide to Social Action (Revised)
B. Lewis
1998, Free Spirit Publishing

This guidebook for grades 4–12 explains "power skills"—letter writing, interviewing, speech making, fund raising, and media coverage—which can be used by students to make a difference. It contains examples of real students who have been successful in campaigns related to social issues. Samples of actual projects and blank forms help readers get started on their own projects.

Legal Issues

Jury Trials in the Classroom
B. M. See
1998, Teacher Ideas Press

For grades 6-8, this how-to book uses a mock trial approach to teach students the legal aspects of trials. Four mock trials serve as examples of both civil and criminal cases.

You decide! Applying the Bill of Rights to Real Cases
G. B. Smith & A. Smith
1992, Critical Thinking Software

For grades 7-12, this book has students act as judges in examining, discussing, and deciding on seventy-five U.S. Supreme Court cases related to the Bill of Rights. Each case includes opportunities for students to develop an understanding of the relevant amendment and its applications.

Additional Resources

Bridges! Amazing Structures to Design, Build and Test
C. A. Johmann & E. J. Rieth
1999, Williamson Publishing

Another Kaleidoscope Kids book for ages 7–12, this how-to book begins with the question, "What do you want to be?" Readers are asked to test options, solve problems, design and build, and imagine what bridges of the future might be like.

Playing the Market
K. Isaacson
2000, Dale Seymour Publications

For grades 5–8, this book brings the stock market into the classroom. It is an ideal reference for students who want to learn the how-to of choosing stocks, reporting and calculating commissions, and tracking investments. It also includes some information about different stock exchanges.

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SUSANNAH RICHARDS is a research assistant at the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented at the University of Connecticut, where she is also pursuing a doctorate in Educational Psychology with an emphasis on gifted and talented learners.

Gifted Education and Social Studies: Engaging All Learners

BY MICHAEL M. YELL

> One may hear a thousand lectures, and read a thousand volumes, and at the end of the process be very much where [he or she] was, as regards knowledge. Something more than merely admitting it into the mind is necessary, if it is to remain there. It must not be passively received, but actually and actively entered into, embraced, mastered. The mind must go to meet what comes to it from without.
>
> —*John Henry Newman, The Idea of the University*

"Based upon a concept called orbital studies by Chris Stevenson, orbital investigations evolve from, or 'revolve around' the existing curriculum."

This quotation is remarkable in a number of ways. To begin with, it points out the need for active and engaging teaching in order to help students embrace content. In this regard the statement could have been made today by such educational thinkers as John Goodlad, Theodore Sizer, or Richard Paul. But what is perhaps most remarkable is that this statement was written by John Henry Newman in 1852. Newman was a contemporary of Henry David Thoreau, Abraham Lincoln, and Sojourner Truth, yet his statement rings truer now than ever.

It is particularly true of social studies, which unfortunately, has the reputation of being too lecture- and worksheet-oriented, and is sometimes noted for mind-numbing coverage of dates, names, and "factoids." Although I have met many excellent teachers of history and social studies, my 26 years in the classroom (teaching world history and American history as well as every social science in every secondary grade level) have also shown me that this charge is not entirely without merit. Too often the steady stream of places, names, and dates students are expected to passively absorb drowns out the rich stories, human dramas, and opportunities for student engagement our disciplines should provide. Perhaps it is not surprising then that history and social studies are frequently listed among students' least favorite classes.

The task of social studies educators must be to engage the minds of our students—to help them embrace our subjects. This task charges us with enriching our teaching for all students as well as providing in-depth challenges for our gifted students.

Enrichment for All

In order to enrich the social studies curriculum for all students, teachers must teach for depth as well as breadth, and utilize a variety of interactive and engaging teaching strategies. In this way, students can become active participants in their own learning.

For students to become active participants, they must be involved in a variety of instructional strategies engaging a variety of thought processes. In addition to their eyes and ears, students must utilize their writing, speaking, and thinking skills as tools of learning. They must combine prior learning, new information, and their own questions in developing new understandings. They must be invested and engaged in the instructional process (see resource sidebar).

Differentiated Challenges for the Gifted

When social studies lessons involve deep thinking and the students are exposed to a variety of engaging teaching strategies, social studies is enriched for all students. Yet, there are still students who need further challenges. As many teachers know through experience, in every heterogeneous class there almost

always are a number of students who operate at higher intellectual levels than others within their age cohort. It is important that these students pursue instructional opportunities that challenge them.

Over the past eight years I have worked to provide higher-level differentiation opportunities for my gifted students at the Hudson Middle School in Hudson, Wisconsin. In the Hudson School District, our gifted program is known as "Zenith." A district committee consisting of teachers, a Zenith coordinator from each school, and the director of pupil services, identifies gifted students for the program with the use of standardized test scores, grades, teacher checklists, and comment sheets.

Orbital Investigations

The needs of students who are in the gifted program can be addressed through a variety of differentiated curriculum adaptations. I call the type of differentiation program that I use "orbital investigations."

Based upon a concept called orbital studies by Chris Stevenson, orbital investigations evolve from, or "revolve around," the existing curriculum. As with many curriculum differentiation programs, students can choose their own topic for investigation based upon their interests and on the curriculum (see resource sidebar).

I teach seventh grade social studies. The sixth and seventh grade social studies curriculum at Hudson Middle School is world history; the sixth grade curriculum focuses on Africa and East Asia while the seventh grade includes what is usually referred to as western history—the Middle East and Europe. I wait until the second quarter before introducing the idea of orbital investigations to my Zenith students. By that time, the Zenith students have been identified and I know my students very well. Occasionally there are students who are not in Zenith but request to take part in orbital studies. If these students have shown excellent working skills, high grades, and interest, I allow them to participate as well.

I invite the Zenith students and the Zenith resource teacher to bring their lunches to my classroom for an orientation session on orbital investigations. During that meeting the program is introduced to the students, and they are told that they can choose a topic that interests them and can use our entire curriculum as a basis for their investigations and final products. We discuss ideas they might investigate, products they may create, and brainstorm possible topics. Usually they have two to three weeks to work on their chosen topics. After discussing the program, they can choose to become involved or stay within the regular curriculum.

As one would expect, many interesting topics are chosen and many creative and excellent products result from the orbital investigations. In the past school year, for example, one of my gifted students conducted a project investigating the beginning of writing; she had e-mail exchanges with a professor from the Middle East specializing in the development of writing. Several others worked together to study weapons from Rome and the Middle Ages and created a "museum" which included written posters and intricately made models of siege weapons and catapults; and two others created a display of ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Roman healing practices includ-

National History Day

"The mission of National History Day is to improve the teaching and learning of history in elementary and secondary schools so that students become better prepared, knowledgeable citizens."

According to the NHD website, National History Day is not a day at all, but a year-long activity to engage students in grades 6-12 in the process of historical research, analysis, and presentation of findings.

A new theme is presented to teachers and students each academic year. The theme is always broad so that students can investigate topics of personal interest and share their results in a great variety of ways at district, state, and national competitions. Presentations include dramatic performances, imaginative exhibits, multimedia documentaries, and research papers.

National History Day was established 25 years ago and has an outstanding track record of providing a challenging and exciting method for students to practice critical thinking and problem-solving—skills they will need throughout life.

2001-2002 Theme: Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History

"Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History" has been selected as the theme for 2001–2002. The NHD website includes an extensive "Theme Narrative" which gives many suggestions to help students make interesting and feasible choices. They are encouraged to consider not only political and military revolutions, which come first to mind, but also to explore economic, social, scientific, and spiritual revolutions and reforms. A lengthy sample of suggested topics is available to help students start thinking about their own investigations.

State Coordinators

All 50 states participate in the NHD competition and each has a state coordinator able to provide teachers and students with additional information including recommended resources within the state. Most state competitions are held in April and May.

National History Day - June 9–13, 2002

National History Day culminates in June with next year's final competition slated for June 9–13, 2002 at the University of Maryland at College Park. There are two levels of entries: Junior—grades 6–8; Senior—grades 9–12. Students may enter as individuals or as groups in the categories of exhibits, performances, and documentaries. Research papers may be submitted by individuals only. You can find all this information and much more on the National History Day website: www.thehistorynet.com/NationalHistoryDay, or you may contact them at 0119 Cecil Hall, University of Maryland, Collge Park, MD 20742, phone 301-314-9739.

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ing written descriptions of these practices and models of their early medical tools.

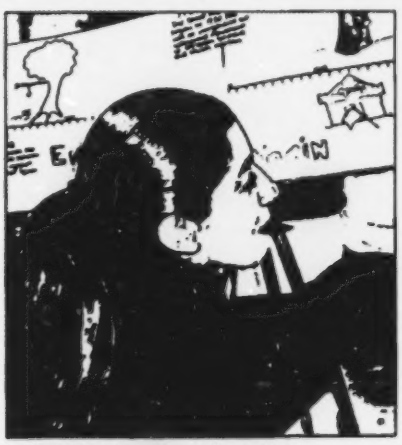
Process and Product

I explain to students that while they are involved in their investigations, their grades will be based on their notebooks where they keep records of research, ideas, and final products, as well as their final products or performances. In other words, if a student works for four weeks, the grade for those four weeks is totally based on the orbital investigation.

The students have several choices for the final project; they can do a performance, a "museum display," or a written report (I know some in gifted education tell students they cannot use more traditional written reports; this is unfortunate in that many of the gifted students I have worked with over the years treasure writing, and prefer to express their ideas in that way). If some students decide to work in groups, each student must have an individual component on which he or she can be graded.

"Instead of," not "In addition to"

This type of investigation, however, cannot be added on top of the regular curriculum. Students are told in the orientation session that their participation in the orbital investigation program is not done in addition to regular class work, but instead of regular class work. Students work on their investigations with the help of our school's Zenith resource teacher. They are generally not in my classroom during the time that they are working on their investigations. The students conduct their research using primary sources as much as possible, and use the processes that historians use.



PRODUCTS. Creative and excellent products result from the orbital investigations

Those students involved in investigations use their final products in National History Day. National History Day is a year-long education program that engages students in grades 6–12 in the process of research and interpretation of historical topics. Students produce dramatic performances, imaginative exhibits, multimedia documentaries, and research papers based on an annual theme. These projects are then evaluated at local, state, and national competitions. It is a program that is excellent for use in gifted education social studies programs.

Social studies is replete with many such programs that can be used to provide deeper challenges for the gifted student. In addition to National History Day, another program is "Project Citizen: We the People" (see sidebars).

Practical Concerns

A number of practical concerns must be addressed with this differentiation program. How each concern is addressed has evolved over time.

RESOURCES

Resources for Engaging Teaching Strategies

History alive! Teaching Students in the Diverse Classroom (1999)
Bower, B., Lobdell, J., & Swenson, L.
Palo Alto, CA: Teachers' Curriculum Institute
www.historyalive.com

Strategies for Teachers: Teaching Content and Thinking Skills (1996)
Eggen, P, Kauchak, D.
Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon/Longman
www.ablongman.com

Inspiring Active Learning: A Handbook for Teachers (1994)
Harmin, M.
Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
www.ascd.org

Models of Teaching (2000)
Joyce, B., Weil, M., & Calhoun E.
Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon/Longman
www.ablongman.com

Cooperative Learning & Social Studies: Toward Excellence and Equity (1998)
Morton, T.
San Clemente, CA: Kagan Cooperative Learning
http://kagancoop.com

Improving Social Studies and History Instruction Using Practical, Engaging, Exemplary Teaching Strategies (2000)
Yell, M
Bellview, WA: The Bureau for Education and Research (BER)
www.ber.org

Uncovering History: Strategies for Content Exploration (forthcoming, 2002)
Yell, M., Scheurman, G., & Reynolds, K
Washington, DC: The National Council for the Social Studies
www.socialstudies.org

Resources for Curriculum Differentiation

Teaching Ten to Fourteen-Year-Olds (1996)
Stevenson, C.
New York: Allyn & Bacon/Longman
www.ablongman.com

The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners (1999)
Tomlinson, C.
Alexandria, VA: The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
www.ascd.org

Teaching gifted kids in the regular classroom (1998)
Winebrenner, S.
Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing
www.freespirit.com

National History Day and Other Social Studies Programs

The website for National History Day is
www.thehistorynet.com/NationalHistoryDay

Many social studies links can be found at *www.socialstudies.org* the official website for the National Council of the Social Studies.

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The first concern was grading; because students were working on independent projects, it was obvious that they could not be graded on the same basis as the other students. The Zenith students who choose to become involved in this program are graded upon the investigation and their final product. Their grade is based upon a rubric which is shared with students and includes the work they do on their investigation, as well as their final product. The rubric is shared with the students as soon as they choose to become involved and includes students' self-assessments as well as the assessments by the Zenith teacher and myself.

Although an original concern involved how students would catch up on information they missed while conducting their investigations, this has turned out to be less of a problem than anticipated. The gifted students who choose to become involved really have no problem picking up information that they missed. I assign them a few readings containing some of the missed information and ask them to be in the classroom for overview and review lessons. I have found that when it comes time to take a test these students do excellently even on the portions of the curriculum they missed while they were out of class.

Often they will work in the Zenith resource teacher's room, and when that person is not available, in the media center or in an open area outside of my classroom. However, my initial concern with the ability of students to work independently outside of the classroom has not really been much of an issue either. The students involved in the orbital investigations are generally quite capable of working independently on projects they are interested in. Students are told during their orientation that their work will be largely independent, and if they do not feel that they can do it, they should not become involved.

My experience with orbital investigations has demonstrated that involving gifted students in such differentiated opportunities not only provides important and essential opportunities to the students, but is a rewarding opportunity for them and for me as the teacher.

Enriching the Social Studies for All Students

Social studies is a subject area with rich and vital content. Teachers have a wide array of resources to help them develop and use engaging strategies in order to help their students explore this content; these include resources that can be used to enrich the learning of all students as well as provide deeper opportunities for the gifted.

In order to enrich the social studies classroom for all, social studies teachers should first work to expand their repertoire of active teaching strategies, and provide lessons that examine topics in depth with students. Using an orbital investigation format or other curriculum differentiation opportunities will provide gifted students with the deeper challenges they often crave. Tying in differentiated curricular opportunities with a well-known program, such as National History Day, provides an extra bit of motivation, as well as an excellent experience for the students.

The content and the processes of social studies are rich and vital; it should be an inquiry for both students and teachers. The most important requirement for enriching social studies for all students is for the social studies teacher to embrace that inquiry. ■

MICHAEL M. YELL teaches seventh grade social studies at the Hudson Middle School in Hudson, WI. He was named Teacher of the Year by the National Council for the Social Studies in 1998. He was awarded the 1998 Teacher of the Yea award by Hudson district's parent council for the Gifted and Talented, for his differentiation program for gifted students. He can be reached at yellmm@hudson.k12.wi.us.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS

The Geographically Informed Person knows and understands ...

THE WORLD IN SPATIAL TERMS:

Standard 1: How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information.

Standard 2: How to use mental maps to organize information about people, places, and environments.

Standard 3: How to analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on Earth's surface.

PLACES AND REGIONS:

Standard 4: The physical and human characteristics of places.

Standard 5: That people create regions to interpret Earth's complexity.

Standard 6: How culture and experience influence people's perception of places and regions.

PHYSICAL SYSTEMS:

Standard 7: The physical processes that shape the patterns of Earth's surface.

Standard 8: The characteristics and spatial distribution of ecosystems on Earth's surface.

HUMAN SYSTEMS:

Standard 9: The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth's surface.

Standard 10: The characteristics, distributions, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.

Standard 11: The patterns and networks of economic interdependence on Earth's surface.

Standard 12: The process, patterns, and functions of human settlement.

Standard 13: How forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface.

ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY:

Standard 14: How human actions modify the physical environment.

Standard 15: How physical systems affect human systems.

Standard 16: The changes that occur in the meaning, use, distribution, and importance of resources.

THE USES OF GEOGRAPHY:

Standard 17: How to apply geography to interpret the past.

Standard 18: To apply geography to interpret the present and plan for the future.

Source: National Council for Geographic Education
www.ncge.org/publications/tutorial/standards
Permission granted by the National Geographic Society

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We the People...Project Citizen: A Gifted Idea!

BY SUSIE BURROUGHS

Is there a research-supported means to successfully provide students with opportunities to develop and enhance their information-processing skills in meaningful, interesting contexts? How can we comprehensively integrate essential process skills with appropriate subject area content? Is it possible to develop structured, yet flexible, learning activities for students that are simultaneously problem-based, student-centered, cooperative, and experiential in nature?

The answer to all of these questions is yes, and we have to look no farther than We the People...Project Citizen. Project Citizen, a nationally recognized academic program, effectively offers students opportunities to develop and enhance their information-processing skills within a student-driven framework of learning. Enacted by Congress and funded through the U. S. Department of Education, Project Citizen is administered by the Center for Civic Education in cooperation with the National Conference of State Legislatures. Targeting the middle grades, the primary goal of Project Citizen is to create in young people an understanding of public policy-making in order to empower them to become informed and responsible participants in state and local government.

The project is designed as a simple six-step process. Students first identify a public policy problem that exists in their community. Working as a team, they must gather and evaluate pertinent information on the problem. Then, the students examine and evaluate alternative solutions to the problem. After deciding on the single best solution, the class proposes a new or improved public policy, and an action plan is developed. Finally, the students, both as a class and on individual bases, reflect on what they have learned and how they learned it.

In addition to the skills development aspect of Project Citizen, the program includes an exemplary performance assessment component. Students are required to document and exhibit their investigations, analyses, conclusions, and recommendations in a class portfolio, to include a display board and three-ring binder. Having become experts on their topic of choice, the students present their research, findings, and action plan to teachers, parents, community members, and/or appropriate governmental officials. This "hearing" serves as the culminating activity for the project. It is, first and foremost, the students' time to show what they know. It may, however, also become the vehicle by which they actually impact public policy-making. Their action plan, if presented to those who possess the power to make the recommended policy changes, can ultimately serve as a blueprint for modification of standing public policies or implementation of new public policies.

After completion of the project, students and teachers may submit the portfolio to district, state, and national competitions. Winning state portfolios that advance to the National Exhibition and Competition are made available for viewing and judged at the National Conference of State Legislators annual meeting. The range of topics selected by students for study and the depth of the research and analysis conducted by the students continue to impress and amaze all involved in the program.

With Project Citizen now in its fifth year, students all over the nation have begun to look around their communities and to identify public policy issues and problems that need addressing. They have begun to learn what investments must be made, both in time and energy, if solutions are to be found and achieved. Thousands of middle school youngsters have begun to hone the skills they will employ as participating adult citizens in their communities and states.

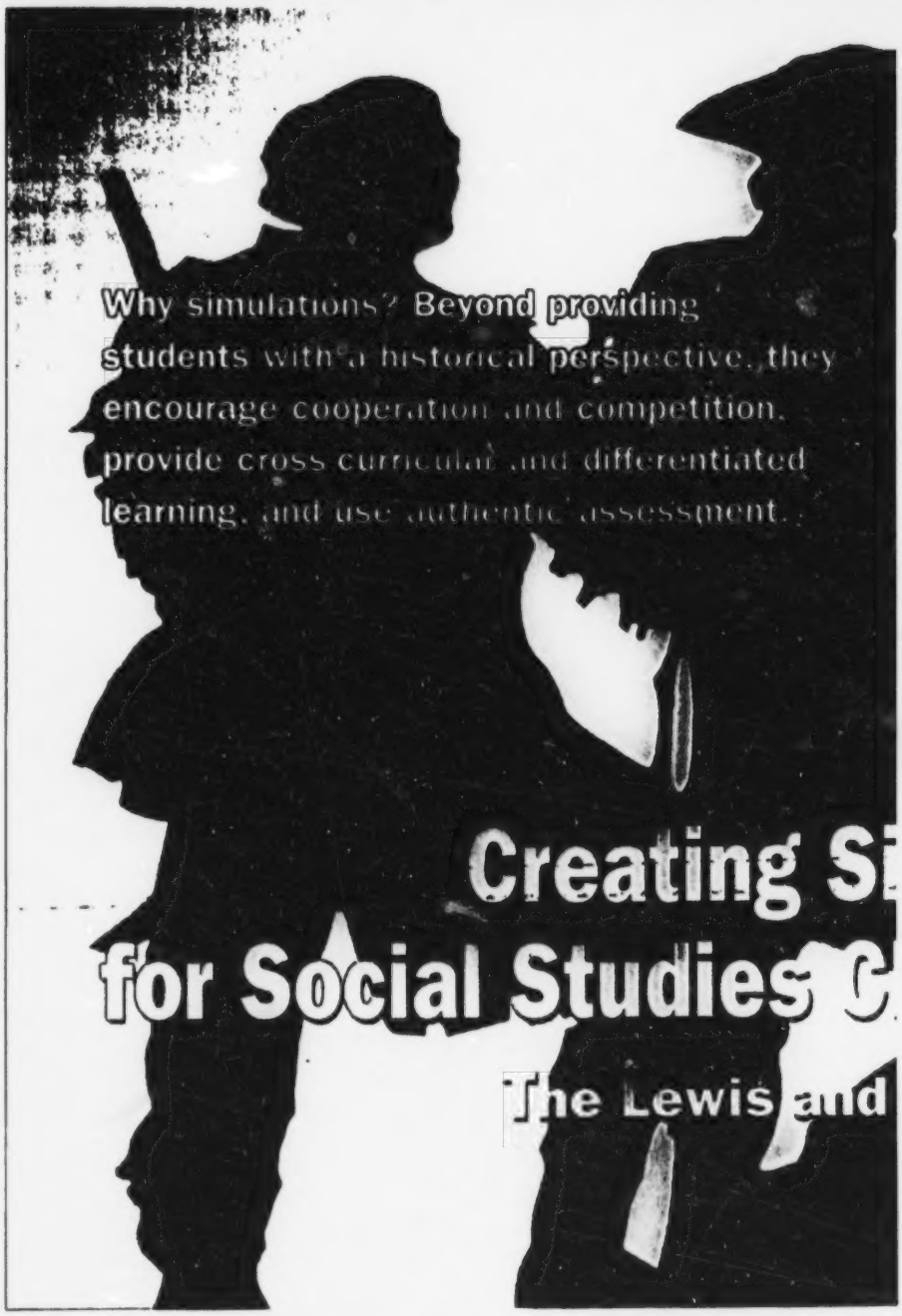
What follows are brief synopses of four Project Citizen portfolios developed by students in Mississippi this past school year. Each serves, respectfully, as a prototype of the possibilities for considering state, county, city, and school level policy matters.

- **Drive Now, Talk Later.** Sixth-grade students from Colmer Middle School (Pascagoula) studied the dangers of using cellular phones while driving. The students' action plan recommended state legislation to regulate the use of hand-held cellular phones while driving.
- **Who Let the Dogs Out?** Eighth-grade students attending the Choctaw Tribal Schools (Philadelphia) studied the importance of animal control laws in their county. The students' action plan called for stricter enforcement of public policies already in place and establishment of an animal shelter.
- **A Park for Ellisville.** Eighth-grade students at South Jones Middle School (Ellisville) addressed the need for an improved municipal recreational area for children. The students' action plan outlined a site layout for a new city park.
- **Recycling at Tupelo High School.** Ninth-grade students at Tupelo High School (Tupelo) analyzed the problem of waste of potentially recyclable materials at their school. Their action plan suggested initiating a schoolwide recycling campaign.

In the same way the range of topics for study are as varied as the communities in which the students live, so too is the variety of instructional settings in which Project Citizen can and is being utilized. Teachers of the social studies, language arts, and sciences are all having remarkable success with the program in their classrooms. Due to its lack of content specificity, Project Citizen provides a framework for high-interest, comprehensive study that can be adapted to a single content area or as an interdisciplinary unit of study. Furthermore, teachers of gifted students have discovered that while the program defines the project steps in concrete sequence, the lack of finite parameters for the scope of the project allows students, as the authors of their project and the owners of their learning, to expand and extend their project as they deem necessary and appropriate—truly a gifted idea!

For more information about Project Citizen, please visit the Center for Civic Education's website at *www.civiced.org*, or call 818-591-9321. ■

SUSIE BURROUGHS is an Assistant Professor of Education at Mississippi State University. Her teaching experience includes middle and secondary gifted social studies education. She is currently the Mississippi Coordinator for the We the People... Programs, serves as the Executive Director of the Mississippi Council for the Social Studies, and is a member of the National Council for the Social Studies Board of Directors.


Why simulations? Beyond providing students with a historical perspective, they encourage cooperation and competition, provide cross curricular and differentiated learning, and use authentic assessment.
Creating Si
for Social Studies C
The Lewis and

The use of simulations was already well established in my school district when I began my assignment as the gifted and talented education teacher. It took only one personal experience for me to understand why they were so popular. Simulations provide opportunities for students to participate actively in reenacting history. Oftentimes they are required to assume the same roles as specific people in history, participate in decision-making that will affect their success on their journey, and complete projects that challenge their skills as researchers.

Of the many explorers who braved the unknown territory west of the Mississippi River, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark's encounters are among the most fascinating. When they began their journey into the unknown from Fort Mandan, the Corps of Discovery, as Lewis and Clark called their group of men, consisted of 33 men, one woman, Sacagawea, one slave named York, and a dog called Seaman. Their experiences with Indians, the encumbrance of a new baby, battles with forces of nature, reoccurring sicknesses, lack of food, the general logistics of an exploration of that length, and the multitude of their accomplishments is an extraordinary story, one worthy of sharing with students.

The book, *Undaunted Courage* by Stephen Ambrose (1996), ignited my curiosity and I remained captivated by the Corps of Discovery to the end. There are countless adventures to savor from the journey, but the success of the expedition is a testament of good fortune, human endurance, cooperation, teamwork, scientific discovery, and political conquest. It is a story that deserves more than a few pages in a social studies textbook.

Reasons for Choosing Lewis and Clark

I had several reasons for wanting this expedition to serve as the basis for a simulation. The journey of Lewis and Clark was extremely exciting and adventurous and bound to appeal to students. The story of the Corps of Discovery is unique as few adventure novels have so many encounters with bears, waterfalls, mosquitoes, thieves, sandstorms, prickly pears, and diseases. It provides interest for even the most discriminating gifted students. And if they weren't initially enthralled, the multiple tales of the laxative effect of Dr. Rush's thunderbolts will no doubt draw them in. The great variety of adventure lends itself to easy preparation of a differentiated unit.

COMPLEMENTARY TALENTS AND TEAMWORK Clark as peacemaker, negotiator and diplomat with Native Americans, Lewis as leader and naturalist, and the cooperation of the Corps of Discovery contributed to the success of an extraordinary journey.

I knew that most children have heard of Sacagawea, and this background knowledge would give them some measure of confidence as they began to investigate an event in history they otherwise knew little about. Most historians agree that Sacagawea was a remarkable young woman. I delighted in the fact that she was the only woman on the

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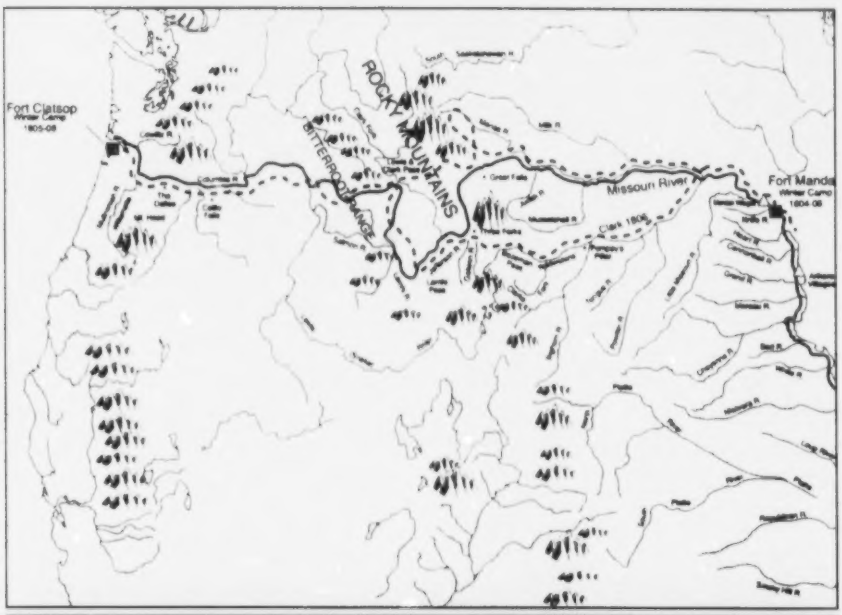
BY MARY PAT VARGAS



THE GOAL As students complete tasks, they collect journey cards that translate to miles forward—a race from Fort Mandan to the Pacific Ocean

journey and I looked forward to the students discovering this information. I was eager to ask my female students if they would consider a journey into the unknown with 32 unfamiliar foreign men in need of baths. (It turned out that not many would.) The simulation enables students to uncover inaccurate presumptions concerning Sacagawea's contributions to Lewis and Clark's achievements.

There is a multitude of resources available concerning Lewis and Clark's journey, including easily accessible, high quality information on the Internet. It is easy for students to contribute to a class library for the duration of the simulation. Various types of resource materials are essential in order to provide experience with many categories of text at different reading levels. It is important that students further develop their skills as researchers, read historical text for pleasure, succeed at divergent knowledge acquisition, and be able to choose the appropriate source for information gathering. The resources related to Lewis and Clark provide opportunities for all these objectives.

Lewis and Clark traversed a large part of North America on their journey. Sent by President Thomas Jefferson, they were the first to chart the area west of the Mississippi River. This historical event serves as an opportunity to strengthen students' geographical awareness in a purposeful way. The maps used during the simulation were dated 1803. Only 15 states had achieved statehood by that time and students must rely on the use of latitude and longitude for landmarks in research.

Putting the Simulation Together

The success the students and I enjoyed with previous simulations gave me a valuable template to start with. I used past experiences and the statistics from recent student surveys to develop activities, roles, and rules I knew were popular and successful with students.

To begin the simulated journey of Lewis and Clark, students are grouped in corps and assigned roles similar to the ones described in the journals of Lewis and Clark. The role-playing rotates each time the simulation is played so that each child may receive more than one experience in each role.

The goal of the student corps in the simulation of Lewis and Clark is to complete tasks enabling the team to collect journey cards that translate to miles forward. The corps begin their pirogue (canoe) journeys at Fort Mandan and race to be the first to reach the Pacific Ocean. Student corps may also encounter unfortunate obstacles slowing their progress, moving the corps backwards if they research improperly or if they fail to complete all their tasks for the day. Lewis and Clark were blessed with an amazing amount of luck, and therefore, chance is a realistic element of the simulation.

Roles Within The Simulation

Role-playing is the primary component of the Lewis and Clark simulation; the explorers would not have succeeded without the unfailing cooperation of the entire corps. The Corps of Discovery included two captains, interpreters, journal writers, and many privates. Each member of the Corps had distinct gifts to contribute and remarkably, at no time during the real journey were the contributions of any individual ignored or undervalued. There are several examples of cooperation in the history of Lewis and Clark's journey, including the time when the Corps reached a fork in the Missouri River. Because they

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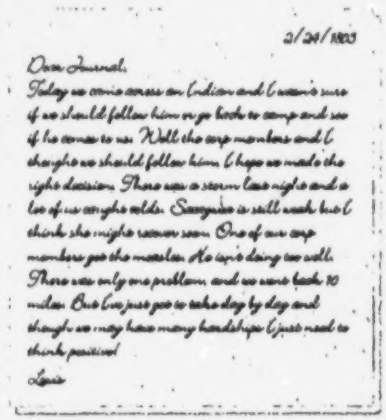
were explorers in uncharted territory, Lewis and Clark often relied on Indian reports, their Corps' advice, or their intuition to guide them toward the Pacific Ocean. Captains Lewis and Clark never abused their roles as leaders and as a result, the Corps always proceeded on, even when they believed the captains to be headed in the wrong direction.

I wanted the students' encounter with the journey of Lewis and Clark to mirror the interpersonal experiences between the two captains and the Corps of Discovery as closely as possible. Therefore, the roles students assume in their corps are modeled after real people and their responsibilities are historical reflections of true events.

Captain. Wise decision-making is one of the hallmarks of a good leader. Unfailing support comes with fair leadership. In addition to other responsibilities, the captain in the simulation may overrule any decision his or her corps makes, especially the decision regarding the daily dilemma—a problem modeled after an experience faced by the Corps of Discovery.

Journal writer. The extraordinary story of the Lewis and Clark expedition was made known to us only because the captains and several of the men of the Corps of Discovery kept diaries of their daily adventures, though some wrote more often than others. Lewis and Clark both succeeded remarkably in describing the unsurpassed beauty of the landscape. The journal writer in the simulation is encouraged to do the same as the men of the Corps of Discovery: use creativity to describe the events of the day, location of the corps, the weather, and provide commentary on the cohesiveness of his or her corps.

Interpreter. President Jefferson made it clear that documenting the ethnography of the Indian tribes encountered along the way was an important aspect of the journey. As the journey progressed, it was apparent that language barriers might hinder the success of the journey. In order to overcome this handicap the Corps hired Touissant Charbonneau at Fort Mandan, a Frenchman, who spoke French and Hidasta, a native language. He brought one of his young wives, Sacagawea, who spoke Hidasta and also Shoshone, her native language. When the Corps met the Shoshone Chief, Lewis and Clark were able to trade for valuable horses to continue the journey to the Pacific Ocean over the Bitterroot Mountains. As a valued member of the corps, the interpreter in the simulation plays a role similar to Meriwether Lewis. He or she is responsible for writing a postcard to President Jefferson describing the ethnography of the Indians in the vicinity of the corps.



2/20/1805

Dear Journal,

Today we came across an Indian and I wasn't sure if we should follow him or go back to camp and see if he came to us. Well the corp members and I thought we should follow him. I hope we made the right decision. There was a storm last night and a few of us are sore today. Sacagawea is still weak but I think she might recover soon. One of our corp members got the measles. He says he's doing too well. There was only one problem, and we were lost 10 miles. But I'm just glad to take day by day and though we may have many hardships I just need to think positive!

Lewis

Jan.1, 1805

Dear President Jefferson,

We have the winter in the Mandan Indian village and made some good frineds. We found that they hunted buffalo and to do that, they disguised themselves in wolf skins (which buffalo are not afraid of) to stalk these great beasts. They also had a buffalo society, where warriers would put on war paint to perform ceremonial dances and wielded lances, club, shields and guns in a frenzied pantomime of real fighting.

Sincerely,
William Clark

ROTATING ROLE PLAYING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Fulfilling tasks required by their [illegible] people, students keep a diary, sketch [illegible] ing the journey and write postcards to President Jefferson

Privates. As with any journey, there is an abundance of day-to-day tasks to be completed. A team effort and participation of each member is essential. The simulation recognizes the key contributions of the privates in the Corps of Discovery and seeks to imitate their importance by stipulating that tasks completed earn a journey card that is necessary if the corps is to move any distance. The tasks are cross-curricular, designed to be completed independently, and they make use of the seven intelligences.

Opportunities for Depth, Complexity, and Novelty

Simulations are not simply a diversion from reading, comprehending, and repeating the textbook, although they provide that as well. They are also an opportunity for students to explore areas of interest in depth and independently, essential options for gifted students. Simulations also provide invaluable interpersonal experiences, a life skill often overlooked when a regular classroom teacher is inundated with meeting national and state standards.

One might ask how a teacher can justify introducing a simulation that may encompass only a small part of the required curriculum. When choosing a simulation, the opportunity to share historical information should be just one of many objectives. There are many benefits to be gained in addition to knowledge acquisition including those listed below.

Inherent in most social studies simulations are a multitude of opportunities to explore history, construct knowledge, and dissect information providing the differentiation needed by gifted students. Videos, Internet sites, historic fiction, and textbooks present students with a variety of resources to aid in research.

The simulation of Lewis and Clark's journey contains various multidisciplinary tasks for the role-playing privates. Students may further develop their communication, writing, arts and crafts, mapping, and research skills, making connections between all the subjects. Several "challenge activities" that may require sophisticated skills or knowledge, are also integrated into the simulation.

Like other similar simulations, that of Lewis and Clark can easily be modified. If using all the tasks seems time-consuming or daunting, teachers may alter this element. A teacher may choose to offer a reduced number of tasks on any certain day without affecting the outcome or participation level of the simulation.

The tasks are intentionally designed for students (acting as privates) to complete independently, however, assistance can easily be injected when needed. It is essential to provide just enough scaffolding to enable

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students to know what questions to ask. This scaffolding teaches students to think. Any task may be completed cooperatively, however, the corps team must consider the time involved; working together sometimes decreases the number of completed tasks. Completed tasks earn journey cards that are translated to miles.

Participating in cooperative teams is valuable experience that helps to improve interpersonal skills and nourish personal growth. Gifted students benefit from the challenge of negotiating with peers of the same or higher intellectual capacity, interests, and enthusiasm.

Rotating role-playing provides gifted students with practice in leadership positions. The role-playing captain is given ultimate author-

"The story of Lewis and Clark provides interest for even the most discriminating gifted students."

ity, a true test of the gifted child's communication, conflict-resolution, and organizational skills.

Competition is often a popular aspect of offering simulations. In classrooms, opportunities for gifted students to work together in competing teams are often not permitted because of the unfair advantage their skills seem to present. In reality, although gifted children are unique, their needs, talents, and interests are as varied as any other group of children.

Simulations provide excellent opportunities to utilize authentic assessment. Gifted children quickly understand that authentic assessment is their opportunity to demonstrate responsibility. Many simulations, including Lewis and Clark, provide opportunities for students to pursue areas of interest, and to respond creatively. The products of these activities can be scored using rubrics or grades if the teacher is required to record specific measurements of progress

To summarize, the benefits of simulations include: differentiated learning, choice, independent projects, cooperative teams, role-playing, competition, cross-curricular activities, and authentic assessment. They all serve to broaden the scope of a social studies simulation well beyond its historical prospective. Gifted students benefit from encouragement in seeking information from multiple sources including teachers, peers, students outside of class, adults at home, or in the community. They will gain experience in problem-solving by negotiating, researching, and working hard. A positive simulation experience results in a learning environment in which students accept responsibility for their own learning.

The men of the Corps of Discovery proceeded on when private Cruzzate accidentally shot Lewis in the buttocks and refused to admit it. They proceeded on when prickly pears penetrated their thin moccasins making the portage around the Great Falls painful and difficult. They proceeded on when, after exhausting their supplies, they gorged themselves with dried fish from the Nez Percé, and suffered miserably for many days after. They proceeded on when in the words of Meriwether Lewis they "Suffered everything Cold, Hunger & fatigue could impart." The members of the expedition worked together as a well-disciplined family. Their story is crowded with examples of teamwork, unfailing support of leadership, cooperation, and tenacity— all exceptional models of behavior I want my students to discover and duplicate. ■

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MARY PAT VARGAS is the GATE teacher for Union School district in San Jose, CA., where she teaches a pull-out program for grades 3, 4, and 5. In 2001-2002, she assumes the additional role of serving as a resource teacher providing assistance for meeting the needs of gifted students in regular classrooms..

TIPS FOR A POSITIVE SIMULATION EXPERIENCE

Have students help contribute to a classroom library. Encourage them to bring in a variety of books at multiple reading levels. Label the books appropriately so they can be easily returned.

Encourage students to use the Internet at home and in school. Set up a log or binder for them to record useful or interesting sites. Allow them to bookmark the most notable sites on the classroom computers.

Request parent help before and during the simulation. Many activities are hands-on; an extra pair of hands to provide assistance with organization and assembling materials for the day is helpful.

Allow choice when grouping students. Enthusiasm is usually higher when students are excited about the peers they will be working with. Compromising by creating teams of children with various levels of enthusiasm produces fair competition and can be done by allowing some measure of choice.

Try a few projects yourself. You know the abilities of your students best and will then be prepared to scaffold learning appropriately if it's needed.

Be honest. You don't need to know all the answers—just know where to find them.

Expect a noisy classroom. Simulations are opportunities for active learning and creative thinking. Competition encourages students to be curious about the activities going on around them.

Remain flexible in determining the amount of time dedicated to the simulation. You may need to adjust the suggested rewards (Lewis and Clark journey cards) depending on the abilities and interests of your class.

Spend time modeling cooperative behavior. Cooperative learning may be new to some students. What to say and how to say it during negotiations should be demonstrated often. Groups that are able to divide tasks efficiently and negotiate fairly are usually the most successful.

Because the tasks are self-directed, interpretation of the requirements will vary. Remain consistent in your assessment when awarding credit for completed tasks. Be fair in your judgment of penalties.

—Mary Pat Vargas

COFFEE FOR A CAUSE

Children Helping Children

BY SARA JORDAN AND CHELSEA DURDEL

On December 6, 2000, a group of seventh grade students went on a tour of a children's hospital in Akron, Ohio. The students had an enjoyable and engaging experience as they were guided through the burn center and neonatal intensive care units, and were surprised by the colorful and buoyant overall atmosphere of the place. For many of the students, however, the most memorable aspect of the trip was not the CAT scan machine or the three-dimensional mural lining the lobby.

The group was led to the radiology area of the hospital, in which several black-and-white pictures were hanging on an X-ray board. The images displayed several human bodies, evidently those of kids, and were flecked with white blots. A nurse explained that the children in the pictures were a few of their patients, and the white splotches dotting their small shapes were an incurable and fatal form of cancer.

The students, for possibly the first time in their lives, realized what a hospital truly is. It isn't a place where men and women in green scrubs and starched lab coats give check-ups and run tests. They discovered that not everyone who goes into the hospital comes out of it. People spend lives filled with anguish there; some even die. The children in these X-rays were never going to play a sport after school, or go to a concert, or any of the other things that these visiting children studying their images would be doing when they walked out of the hospital doors. The children in the X-rays were going to die.

The students' eyes began to water as this new realization of life's fragility dawned on them. How would it feel to be given the information displayed on the X-ray boards?

"Who tells the children what's going to happen to them?" asked a girl in the tour group.

After a fervent pause, the nurse responded with a reflective, almost thankful, "It's not my job. The family's doctor bears that awful news."

The seventh grade students—us—were complete strangers to these children in the black-and-white pictures. We wanted to help—but how? Now, in our eighth grade year, we have helped the children on the X-ray board—and others.

How We Helped

Now, it's been a year since we visited Akron Children's Hospital. The group of students on tour were gifted children taking part in a monthly seminar series as part of an enrichment program called Project Plus in the Twinsburg, Ohio Public Schools. It was one of this article's co-authors (Sara) who had asked the nurse about the children in the pictures.

Headed by Kent State professor and personal friend, Dr. James Delisle, Project Plus has been a fun, exciting, and enlightening experience. We've gone to many remarkable places through this program, including a homeless shelter, the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, the FBI, a local historic cemetery, and Kent State's world famous Liquid Crystals Institute. But most students would agree that none of the visits impacted us as much as the trip to Akron Children's Hospital.

Last year, in response to that trip, Project Plusers organized the first annual "Coffee for a Cause," a fund raiser in which students throughout the middle school grades presented their talents in writing, music, dance, and drama to raise money for the hospital's Burn Center. This regional burn center had a summer camping program for children who were recovering from severe burns that had, in some cases, totally disfigured their faces; we thought our money should go to these kids who had been injured so badly. Plans were made to perform at a local coffee house, with a portion of the proceeds of coffee and pastry sales going to the hospital. After

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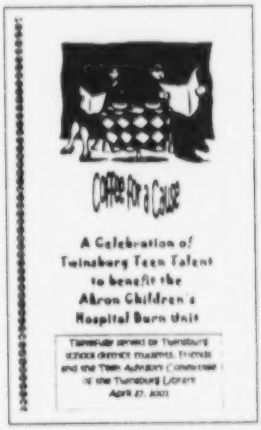
more than two hours of poetry recitations, vocal and instrumental solos, dance routines, and dramatizations from *Hamlet*, the students raised $331.20.

Although we considered the night a success, there were a few drawbacks to using the local coffee house. First, it was small and crowded, and the noise produced by the very active cappachino machine sometimes drowned out the voices and music. Second, the coffee house gave only a percentage of the profits to our cause, meaning less money would go to the burned children. If we could move the fund raiser to a more open location that would allow us to keep all the proceeds, we could help more children.



Keeping this in mind, we decided to move the second annual "Coffee for a Cause" to our local library. The Young Adult librarian, Ms. Laura Leonard, was very happy to help by hosting us in such a worthy cause. A hanging bedsheet served as our backdrop, and participants either stood in front of it and presented, or behind it, with their silhouettes visible on the sheet in a medium known as "backlighting."

Donated pastries and coffee were sold while over 40 students in grades 7–12 recited well-known works by Langston Hughes or Maya Angelou. Others recited their own poetry or prose, written in their language arts classes. Still more performed scenes from our upcoming eighth grade class play, "Flowers for Algernon" (the scene where Charley meets the father who gave him up to a state institution twelve years earlier). Students from the Twinsburg High School Jazz Ensemble entertained at intermission ("Zoot Suit Riot") and even Britney Spears made an appearance, in the form of Stacy Steele, an eighth grader who performed "What you see is what you get."

The whole evening was filled with music, drama, talent, miscues, and laughs. We also raised more than $530 while managing to get more than 200 students and community members to come to the library on a beautiful Friday evening.

We think it is a very good thing to use our work and our talents to help other people we do not even know. It goes along with one of Dr. Delisle's favorite quotes from a recently-arrived immigrant to America from Europe in 1912: "Before coming to America, I heard the streets were paved with gold. When I arrived, I learned three things. First, the streets weren't paved with gold. Second, they weren't paved at all. And third, I was expected to pave them."

In our own small way, the performers served, almost 100 years later, as a different kind of construction crew: one that built dreams, not roads.

Our third annual "Coffee for a Cause" is already scheduled for April 19, 2002. If you can attend, we'd love to have you share in our pastries and our learning.

How The Night Begins

In what has become a tradition, of sorts, "Coffee For A Cause" evenings begin with the same poem:

Poetry

What is poetry?
It is such a simple word,
Yet so hard to define.

Far from just rhyming,
Poetry is a portal between
destinations.
Poetry takes you away from normal
life
And into a rebirth, into imagination.

Poetry creates a division between
those
Who are poets
And those who are not.

Poetry is a work of art that has a mind
Of its own
Poetry describes what does not exist
But always has.

Poetry opens your eyes
To see what is invisible
Poetry lets you hear the silence.

—Stephen Kelier, age 13

The student writers of this article are all graduating eighth graders in the Twinsburg School District in Twinsburg, OH, and members of Project Plus, an enrichment program for gifted students created and led by James Delisle from Kent State University in Kent, OH.

WHY WE DECIDED TO PERFORM

This year's "Coffee for a Cause" was a blast! Two of my friends and I decided to do this because it was for a good cause and it looked like fun. We then had to pick what we were going to do. We all decided we would be like a mini band. We picked the song "Follow Me" by Uncle Kracker. I was going to be on guitar, my friend Steve Bryant was on keyboard and Matt Pfeffer was on drums.

When we got there, everyone looked nervous, and we were too, because Steve hadn't shown up yet! Matt and I waited as the seats in the library filled up. The first act started and got good applause. Matt and I started really getting worried now, but finally Steve came and we performed. All the anxiety was over and we had a great time.

There were lots of good acts. The High School Jazz Band performed loudly, there were poetry recitals, and a scene from the eighth grade play had a great time and it was worth giving up a Friday night so that kids we don't even know can go to camp this summer.

Ryan M. Hawkins

We decided to do our act for "Coffee for a Cause" because it looked like an easy way to raise money for some kids who needed our help. At first, we thought it was too crowded to perform our act, a jazz dance, because there were six of us and we didn't know if we would fit on the stage. But instead of backing out, we decided to perform anyway.

When we arrived at the library, we noticed most of the acts were poetry readings and skits. We were the only ones dancing. This made us nervous. We knew the dance well because we had stayed after school to practice a lot and had already performed it once at the school's talent show. We went on the stage confidently and performed well. It was definitely worth our time, and we were all happy that we participated in "Coffee for a Cause." Not only did we have fun ourselves, but we helped kids who have been burned.

We were proud to participate in an event to help raise money for a worthwhile cause.

Brittany Dan and Shannon Suvegis

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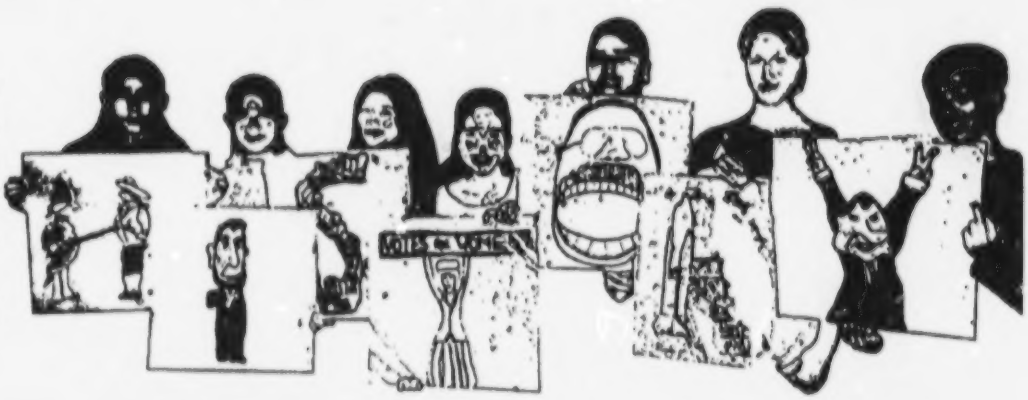


Eighth-graders in Christa Como's U.S. History class spell out the year's work — H-I-S-T-O-R-Y

Haydock Intermediate School, Oxnard, CA

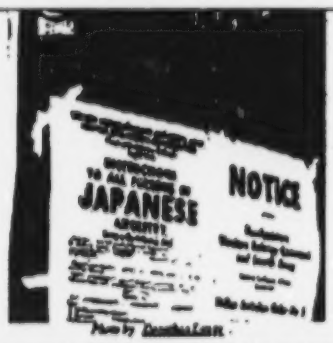
History Matters

The U.S. Suvey Course on the Web

BY KELLY SCHRUM AND ROY ROSENZWEIG

Type "Abraham Lincoln" into an Internet search engine and you will receive anywhere from 300,000 to 1,000,000 "hits." You will find yourself scrolling down lists of websites for the Abraham Lincoln University School of Law, Abraham Lincoln Camp, the "Hideous Jabbering Head of Abraham Lincoln," and the online auction of a "green painted plaster figure" of Lincoln. Meanwhile, you might miss out on some terrific Web-based resources, including the original Lincoln letters at the Library of Congress American Memory site or the documentary history of Lincoln's law practice collected by the Illinois Historical Preservation Society. This example illustrates one of the most common complaints by teachers about the Internet: there is an overwhelming amount of "information" available and it is of varied quality and relevance for the classroom. Teachers often do not have the time to locate and make effective use of the best online resources—to find the substantive, quality sites that will enhance teaching in social studies classrooms. And the lack of control over content, validity, and reliability opens new challenges when sending students to the Internet (Risinger, 1998).

Yet the Internet also offers amazing opportunities for social studies teachers by providing tools that, when used effectively within the large context of the social studies curriculum, can prove invaluable. Internet sites allow teachers to enhance inquiry-based learning by bringing primary resources into the classroom, and they allow students to follow their interests and exert greater control over their learning environment. Using digital media in social studies classrooms can also help bridge the gap between reading and writing through online interaction, extending the time and space for dialogue and learning as well as helping make student work public in new formats (Rosenzweig & Bass, 2001; Bass, Errikson, Eynon & Sample, Eds. 1998). But these possibilities do not fully address the challenge of finding and using quality Internet sources. In light of the phenomenal growth of the Internet, its increasing importance in the social studies classroom, and the incredible time required to identify quality sites, teachers need tools for navigating its vast but uneven resources. This article will explore one such tool, History Matters—a free, noncommercial website designed to assist social studies and history teachers at high schools and colleges around the world.



WESTERN DEFENSE COMMAND AND FOURTH ARMY
WARTIME CIVIL CONTROL ADMINISTRATION
Presidio of San Francisco, California
May 3, 1942

INSTRUCTIONS
TO ALL PERSONS OF
JAPANESE
ANCESTRY
Living in the Following Area:

All of that portion of the City of Los Angeles, State of California, with that boundary beginning at the point at which North Figueroa Street meets the following: the middle of the Los Angeles River; thence southerly and following the said line to East First Street; thence westerly on East First Street to Alameda Street; thence southerly on Alameda Street to East Third Street; thence southwesterly on East Third Street to Main Street; thence northerly on Main Street to First

DIGITAL BLACKBOARD This section contains over 40 teacher-tested lessons developed by individual teachers, the Library of Congress, and National Archives. Using various teaching and learning strategies, students study controversial topics in step-by-step assignments with links to multiple resources.

Navigating the Web

History Matters *(history matters.gmu.edu)* was developed by the American Social History Project/Center for Media and Learning at The City University of New York and the Center for History and New Media at George Mason University. This website aims to meet a range of pedagogical, professional, and classroom needs. It features useful and innovative teaching materials, valuable primary documents, and threaded discussions with leading historians on teaching U.S. history. Visitors to the site will find depth as well as breadth, with materials ranging from a discussion on texts and contexts in teaching women's history, to a blues song on domestic work, to a series of sketches detailing one soldier's experiences in World War II.

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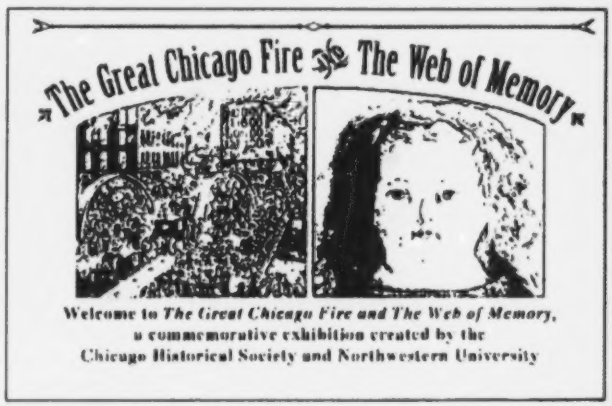
WWW.History

An essential function of History Matters, is to serve as a gateway to prescreened, quality websites. It does this through an annotated guide called WWW.History. There are currently more than 400 such websites and their number is growing rapidly. Each website is carefully evaluated by professional historians for content, depth, and reliability. The annotations summarize each site's content as thoroughly as possible, and emphasize its utility for teachers and students. In addition, the annotations highlight special features; mention sites that are particularly easy or difficult to navigate; and forewarn visitors about any potential problems, such as sites that are "under construction."


The Great Chicago Fire & The Web of Memory
Welcome to *The Great Chicago Fire and The Web of Memory*, a commemorative exhibition created by the Chicago Historical Society and Northwestern University

Each site chosen for WWW.History is indexed and searchable by the type of website (archive, electronic essay, gateway, journal organization, syllabi/assignments), type of resource (text, images, audio, and video), and topic covered. Topics include ten time periods from "Three Worlds Meet, Beginnings to 1620" to "Contemporary U.S., 1968-Present." as well as twenty-two thematic categories that include African Americans, Consumer Culture, Labor, and Women. You might start by visiting some of the seventeen "Best of the Web" sites, or by searching for a specific time period or theme. A fast search engine allows you to search by topic, time period, or keyword to quickly identify quality resources for lesson plans, lectures, projects, assignments, or student research.

"While thousands of primary source documents are now available on the Web, the ones you will find at History Matters have all been screened, edited, and carefully contextualized for classroom use by professional historians"

Bringing Primary documents into the Classroom

Primary documents are the "raw material" of historical research. They provide students with a sense of reality and complexity of the past, and represent an opportunity to interact with real people and problems. Yet, until recently, social studies teachers and library media specialists had little direct access—outside of textbook photographs or edited collections—to these exciting teaching tools. The Internet has dramatically changed this situation, offering teachers and students the opportunity to experience the drama and excitement of reading handwritten diary accounts of the Civil War or examining World War II propaganda posters. The analysis of primary documents, and the structured inquiry learning process that is often used in such examinations, is widely recognized as an essential step in developing student interest in history and culture. And while primary documents are essentially fragmentary and contradictory, requiring both close reading and contextualization to discover their meaning, they are an invaluable teaching tool (Bass, 1997).

Many Pasts

Several features of History Matters enhance the use of primary documents for both teaching and student research. Many Pasts contains more than 500 documents—in text, image, and audio—that highlight the experience of "ordinary" Americans. While thousands of primary source documents are now available on the Web, the ones you will find at History Matters have all been screened, edited, and carefully contextualized for classroom use by professional historians. The new "Featured Document" section will highlight specific documents and provide suggestions about how they can be used in the classroom. In addition, all the documents

are searchable by keyword, topic, or time period, with transcriptions provided for every audio segment.

For example, you can listen to Laura Ellsworth Seiler recall campaigning for suffrage on an automobile tour after college, with her mother in tow as chaperone:

> When I got [to a new town], I had to contact all these women and get them organized. And then I had to make a street speech, and that was in the days when you could still rent cars where the back went down. So we would rent a car and put an enormous banner across the back of it, letting it down, and I would stand up on the back seat and make the speech.

Or you can hear "William Brown" (pseudonym) describe the impact of witnessing a 1902 lynching in Jacksonville, Florida, at the age of five:

See History Matters, 55

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PROJECT P-BLISS

An Experiment in Curriculum for Gifted Disadvantaged High School Students

BY SHELAGH A. GALLAGHER

Of all gifted students, those who are economically disadvantaged are among the most difficult to serve, since they live in settings which often suppress natural passions for academics. Of all gifted disadvantaged students, adolescents may be in greatest danger of underachieving, as peer pressure and low expectations inhibit their inner desire to pursue their gifts. Of all the academic subjects, social studies could be most enticing to gifted disadvantaged adolescents, by revealing the many possible relationships between self and society, opening possibilities unimagined in their home environments . These were the underlying ideas that gave birth to Project P-BLISS: Problem-Based Learning in the Social Sciences. The premise was that disadvantaged gifted adolescents, when presented with rigorous, relevant curriculum, could learn to like learning as they explore the many ways they create identities both as individuals and as members of society.

Basics of Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

In most classroom problem solving, students encounter problems only after they have been presented with a body of information. Often, the problems students face as practice exercises are so narrow in focus that most of the information they read never gets used. In addition, the problems are presented to students after all information is "taught," sending the implicit, though false, impression that problems only arise in venues where all the information needed for solution-building is already at hand. Ironically, these problems don't actually require much problem-solving, but rather the simple application of the appropriate algorithm at the right place and at the right time to acquire a right answer.

Problem-based learning inverts the order of learning as it is traditionally found in classrooms. In PBL learning begins after students are confronted with an ill-structured problem. This way, students know why they're learning: all of the information they gather for a unit of study is learned for the purpose of resolving the problem. Just as a scientist would not perform an experiment before having a question to answer, students in a PBL class do not start learning until they are focused on an ill-structured problem to solve.

The Ill-Structured Problem

Using ill-structured problems is a key element of PBL. Ill-structured, real-life problems differ from the well-structured problems of most school textbooks in several ways. First, the initial situation lacks part of the information necessary to develop a solution or even to precisely define what the problem is. New information must be gathered before the problem can be defined or resolved. Second, there is no single "right" strategy or strategies to use to solve the problem. Many paths can and should be explored. Third, as new information is gathered the problem definition changes, sometimes as a result of refinement, sometimes because new data alter the problem solver's perspective. Finally, students will never be 100% sure that they have made the "correct" selection among solution options because information may still be missing and data or ethical considerations may conflict. Still, just like in the real world, a decision must be made.

"I learned that fairness is not always equal. I also learned that it is best if you find all the research you can to base the problem on rather than look in one book and find a little piece of information and stop, to never give up, and to base your decision fairly (don't pick sides)."

—Project P-BLISS student

Ill-structured problems have the added advantage of being almost inherently interdisciplinary, allowing for many and varied examples of how different disciplines approach the same topic, and how they intersect when problem-solving. They also provide a firm attachment to the real world, serving as exemplars of how different disciplines touch the everyday lives of individuals.

What is Project P-BLISS?

Project P-BLISS is a curriculum development and evaluation project funded by the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Program in the US Department of Education. The grant, which is directed from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, operates through a series of collaborative networks throughout North Carolina. Curriculum experts, Academically Gifted (AG) specialists, and practicing teachers worked together in Project P-BLISS to develop and test five social studies units designed to engage gifted disadvantaged high school students.

P-BLISS Partnerships

Each part of the P-BLISS team plays an important role in the operation of the project. Curriculum and AG specialists write materials, provide teacher training, and oversee implementation of the units. AG teachers and coordinators from these districts not only helped to pilot-test the units, but they were also an integral part of the early design of the units.

The Structure of P-BLISS Units

A Framework: Problem-Based Learning. The P-BLISS units were written to fit into three parts of social studies curriculum: two units were designed for American studies, two for world studies, and two for government classes. Each of the units uses Problem-Based Learning (PBL) as the overall curriculum framework. The orientation of PBL to ill-structured problems was an exact match with the stories that comprise history. In each of the five units, students found themselves transported in time, place, and role, to a pivotal moment in history. In the American studies problem Gateways, students start out the unit by finding a memo like the one in Figure 1 on their desks.

Eventually, the students find themselves embroiled in the midst of the various forms of

Chinese Exclusion Acts, some of the most controversial immigration legislation in the nation's history. To solve the problem, students have to look at the history of Chinese immigration to the US, the evolution of regulations regarding immigration, and the effect that economics has on attitudes toward new immigrants. Similarly, the other P-BLISS units place students squarely in the midst of a different historical controversy. A brief summary of the units is presented in Table 1.

A Cornerstone: Important Content. Of critical importance to the project is that each of the five units aligns with the requirements of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and with the national standards for social studies, American studies or world studies. The units all cover the required content, but that's just the beginning. The problems that engage the P-BLISS students draw them deeper into the content, revealing the intriguing circumstances and complex relationships that make history fascinating. To remedy the problem of scarce resources Resource Disks, floppy disks with primary resource materials, are included with each P-BLISS unit. Information included on the Resource Disks includes Supreme Court rulings, photographs, and congressional legislation.

A Touch of Sophistication: Making it "Gifted." Advanced content and PBL structure serve as a platform to integrate the following forms of curriculum differentiation.

- **Conceptual Focus:** Each of the units makes purposeful use of the National Council of Social Studies (NCSS) theme Individuals, Groups, and Institutions as the larger abstract idea behind each of the problems.
- **Thoughtful Reasoning:** Reasoning skills are developed throughout the units through the use of graphic organizers and question prompts for classroom discussions.
- **Discussion of Ethics:** Each unit includes a framework for thinking about the ethical dilemmas broached by the problems under study
- **Authentic Assessment:** A Problem Log has been designed for each unit to serve as both a portfolio of student work and as a reflective journal for students to record their thoughts and feelings about the problem.

Effects of the P-BLISS Units.

The P-BLISS units were tested, revised, tested, and revised again. Each unit was tested in at least three different classrooms. Many of the units were tested with very different groups of students, from honors level classes to heterogeneous groupings with only one or two identified gifted students in the group. Research data was gathered during the second round of testing; both quantitative and qualitative data supported the effectiveness of the units to enhance both learning and classroom engagement.

P-BLISS teachers, many of whom began the project concerned about taking two weeks out of a jam-packed year to teach an additional unit, came away with a new perspective both on curriculum and on their students. Just as hoped, the teachers had a chance to see their students in a different—better—light. Not only did the predictable students engage in critical thinking and self-directed research, teachers noticed that students who did not seem typically "gifted" emerged as good thinkers and investigators during the unit.

> It is nice to see them really involved in something and to have students who never or rarely participate take the lead…I have seen a group of students who have done what was necessary to get by really take hold of this problem and fly with it!
>
> It is refreshing to see a few of my traditional underachievers (although I have been telling them for months how bright they are) really succeeded. I am wowed by them! We are getting some excellent dialogue out of the experience and some passionate pitches.

In addition, most of the teachers recognized that because the units were set up so that they could "let go," allowing the students to take more charge of classroom discussion and direction, they had more time to coach critical thinking skills rather than focusing on direct instruction of content. For some teachers, the changes in their own ideas about learning were the most profound of all. "I didn't believe I could do it," one teacher said, "but I did…it was scary for me at the beginning, letting go, but the kids were up to it—it was amazing to see them work!"

Students were also enthusiastic about their P-BLISS experiences. Several described with remarkable clarity the effects of learning through an ill-structured problem.

> As I began to answer some of the questions I found that some led in the wrong direction or into a brick wall. But as time went on we worked out the quirks I found that this was a lot of small problems inside one high problem. As we worked out the small problems that huge problem began to shrink in size.
>
> I learned that fairness is not always equal. I also learned that it is best if you find all the research you can to base the problem on rather than look in one book and find a little piece of infor-

House of Representatives
United States Congress

Internal Memorandum

February 11, 1882
Memo to the Representatives from California
From: Office of Thomas Geary, Congress
Re: Your Support for the Attached Bill Components

The attached list of components for the bill we are drafting regarding Chinese immigration to the United States needs your attention, and, hopefully, your support. We are sure you are receiving considerable mail from California voters about the tidal wave of Chinese immigrants that is causing economic and social chaos in your state. We believe that this state of affairs can no longer be ignored.

The final text for this bill will be assembled over the next week. Therefore, we need your reactions to these pieces by Friday. Please tell us which you are willing to support, which you are inclined to reject, which you wish to see changed in some way, and any new components you wish to add.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Figure 1. Example of an ill-structured problem

Table 1. P-BLISS Units

Subject Area	Unit Title	Brief Description
American History	*Who Stands for Children*	Students are placed on the National Child Labor Commissin studying the status of child labor in the Progressive Era
	Gateways	Caught between the desire to serve a constituency who would exclude Chinese immigrants and the US ethic of equal access to all, students must struggle with the Chinese Exclusion Act and Geary Laws of 1882 and 1892.
European History	*To Farm or Not to Farm*	Students experience the struggle of a yeoman farmer who is caught up in the Enclosure Movement at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution.
Government	*A Just Prosecution*	As Assistant District Attorneys, students are faced with the compelling case of a juvenile who has committed a violent crime. As they prepare their case, they must decide whether or not to try the alleged perpetrator as a juvenile or an adult.
	Impasse	The Lakota Indians and the Park Service governing Bear Butte State Park are at loggerheads over the use of the park. Students must try to create an acceptable compromise between closing the park for religious ceremonies and keeping the park accessible to tourists.

Note: One unit, centering on the Zapatista uprising in Mexico, is undergoing substantial revision following the last presidential election in Mexico.

mation and stop, to never give up, and to base your decision fairly (don't pick sides). Also, don't try to find or use information that you don't need. If you're working in groups, split up the work equally, and try to do your part to the best of your ability.

Many of the teachers observed that these attitudes lasted as a kind of "afterglow" of critical inquiry and questioning that lasted throughout the year. Some teachers even claimed that this ultimately helped students on state end-of-year achievement tests.

Next Steps

Project P-BLISS units are in the final stages for dissemination. Gateways and To Farm or Not to Farm should be available in the fall. In the meantime, many of the participants in P-BLISS are now involved in Project Insights, a model program for gifted, disadvantaged middle school students. Curriculum developed under the new grant will integrate social studies and science under the PBL umbrella as one part of a comprehensive program model that moves from the regular classroom to the gifted resource room and beyond. ■

For information about P-BLISS or Insights units, please contact Dr. Shelagh Gallagher at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Department of Counseling, Special Education, and Child Development, 9201 University City Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28223-0001 sagallag@email.uncc.edu.

SHELAGH A. GALLAGHER teaches at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and is the project director for a federal Javits grant on Problem-Based Learning. She presents regularly at national and regional conferences and is the co-author of *Teaching the Gifted Child*.

C-SPAN IN THE CLASSROOM

The cable network C-SPAN was created by America's cable companies as a public service activity. Many educators are aware of the "gavel-to-gavel" coverage of sessions of congress: C-SPAN televises the House of Representatives while C-SPAN 2 televises the Senate. But did you know that they also produce a variety of companion series appropriate for classroom use? And the best part for teachers is a "C-SPAN in the Classroom" feature with free membership, materials, and ideas for teaching history and government.

Their 20th anniversary series, "American Presidents: Life Portraits," profiled the 41 men who had served as chief executive and was a winner of the 1999 Annual Peabody Award. Go to *www.americanpresidents.org*, click on the name of any president and you will find the following choices:

- biographical facts
- key events of each presidency
- presidential places
- reference material
- teacher guides

Furthermore, you can watch the entire series online!

A series on American writers runs through December 2001, and includes in-depth discussions of 45 writers, beginning with William Bradford of Plimouth Colony and ending with Neil Shehan. Programs are historical in nature, illustrating the background events that influenced the writers, their individual works, and major aspects of their careers.

Another C-SPAN feature which both teachers and parents will find useful is the weekend airing of shows related to non-fiction books. C-SPAN 2 carries "Book TV," 48 broadcast hours of author interviews, book talks, book festivals, and analysis of non-fiction works.

For current events, a choice program is "Washington Journal," which airs daily and includes journalists from Washington, D.C. discussing issues and responding to viewer phone questions on the the important topics of the day.

"America & the Courts" is another series of interest and airs Saturday evenings. It often features a Supreme Court justice either giving a public talk or being interviewed, so that one can learn something about their qualities of mind, their general or specific views, and their personalities.

C-SPAN—a national treasure in the "vast wasteland."

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Teaching Social Studies to Gifted Students

Recommended Resources

BY LINDA BRUG AND DEBORAH HAZELTON

ELEMENTARY

A System in Conflict: The American Civil War
Carrie Beth Adams
1999, College of William & Mary (Center for Gifted Education)
paper, $25.00, 207 pp.
This publication includes a series of 20 lessons for 5th and 6th graders in their study of the civil war. There are assessments, group activities, and powerpoint project ideas. Many of the lessons include perspective and related pieces of literature.

Social Studies Excursions: K-3
Janet Alleman and Jere Brophy
2001, Heinemann
paper, $27.50, 319 pp., 0-325-00315-7
This resource is comprehensive in that it offers lessons on food, clothing, and shelter that not only provide a broad base for learning but also an in-depth look into these topics. The unit on food covers the food pyramid, farming, and food over time.

Folk Tales
Beth Amer
1996, Interact Publishing
paper, $52.00, 67 pp., 1-57336-228-X
Students explore folk tales from around the world using print material as well as an audio tape with 14 folk tales included. There are home activities, a culminating Folk Tale Festival, and student summary logs. Students will discover the elements of a folk tale and that many tales share the same details from other parts of the world. The annotated list of folk tales is great for locating more in your own library.

Fantastic Book of 1001 Lists
Russell Ash
1999, DK Publishing
paper, $14.95, 208 pp., 0-7894-3412-1
This book of lists provides an interesting resource to students studying a variety of topics. It includes charts, graphs, dates, and timelines for such topics as World War II, film, artists, and food production. Grades 2–6. There are several other titles in this series for history.

Teaching and Learning History in Elementary Schools
Jere Brophy and Bruce Van Sledright
1997, Teachers College Press
hardcover, $56.00, paper, $27.95, 312 pp.,0-8077-3608-2, 0-8077-3607-4
This book includes a detailed accounting of research and the history of teaching history and social studies in the elementary grades. The authors examine three different 5th grade teachers and collect data and interviews on a sampling of students in a pre/post examination. The last chapter goes over the implications for curriculum and instruction and provides suggestions.

Letters of a Nation
Andrew Carroll, Ed.
1997, Broadway Books
paper, $15.00, 423 pp., 0-7679-0331-5
This collection of letters spanning 350 years of American history is a wonderful resource for teachers studying a specific time period. The letters can be used to illustrate different points of view.

Eyewitness to America
David Colbert, Ed.
1998, Vintage Books
paper, $16.00, 662 pp., 0-679-76724-X
Here is a great resource for primary source documents and letters from the past. Teachers can pick and choose original documents written at the time period being studied. These letters are fantastic for showing different perspectives. Grades 3–12.

Geography is Everywhere
Dorothy Connet, Ed.
1993-2000, Thomas Bros. Maps
Quarterly Newsletters, free, 7-9 pp.
These newsletters include class projects and lessons for grades K–6. It is a small edition and some issues are more extensive than others, but you can find great ideas.

100 Colonial Leaders Who Shaped North America
Samuel Willard Crompton
1999, Bluewood Books
paper, $7.95. 107 pp., 0-912517-35-2
This resource book offers short biographies of individuals who helped shape the history of the United States in the colonial period. The biographies give a personal history, contributions, and personal sacrifices. The entries are in chronological order. Other books in the series include biographies of artists, authors, military figures, and scientists.

Pilgrims
Myron Flindt
1994, Interact Publishing
notebook, $53.00, 70 pp., 1-57336-110-0
In this simulation, students compete against the first Pilgrims in order to do a better job of surviving. Students work in teams to cross the Atlantic and build a colony. There are Fate cards to build in consequences and dangers. The unit can be planned out over time or you can do the whole simulation in three full days. The flexibility in structure is a plus for all teachers. Grades 2–4.

Incredible Edible Geography
Veronica Getskow
1998, Thomas Bros. Maps
paper, $12.00, 64 pp., 0-58174-180-4
Geography ideas in this book enhance the study of map skills using hands-on materials and several projects are edible. Field trip excursions are suggested and include investigations. Great for grades 2–6.

Boomtowns of the West (Life in the Old West Series)
Bobbie Kalman
1999, Crabtree Publishing
paper, $8.00, 30 pp., 0-7787-0110-7
A great resource for upper elementary grades while studying the Westward Movement or the Gold Rush. Chapters cover opportunities, dangers, business, customs, and daily life. Other books in the series include Miners, Homes of the West, and Railroads.

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Children Just Like Me
Barnabas & Anabel Kindersley
1995, DK Publishing (Unicef)
hardcover, $19.95, 79 pp., 0-7894-0201-7
This large picture book investigates children from all seven continents looking at housing, food, play, education, customs and daily living facts and information. This book is great for comparing cultures, neighborhoods and children. Appropriate for students in all grades.

Journeys in Time: A New Atlas of American History
Elspeth Leacock and Susan Buckley
2001, Houghton Mifflin Co.
hardcover, $15.00, 50 pp., 0-395-97956-0
By tracing journeys of the past that shaped our nation, this picture book shows the changes that took place over time. Various journeys can be compared and contrasted. Grades 2–5.

Places in Time: A New Atlas of American History
Elspeth Leacock and Susan Buckley
2001, Houghton Mifflin Co.
hardcover, $15.00, 45 pp., 0-395-97958-7
This picture book features 20 sites in time that shaped our history using maps, visual facts, and simple written descriptions of the time and the people. Grades 2–5.

Systems of Civilization
Catherine A. Little
2000, College of William & Mary (Center for Gifted Education)
paper, $25.00, 277 pp.
This publication includes a series of 25 lessons comparing the ancient Egyptian and Chinese cultures to your own community. The units are intended for grades 2–3.

Cities, Citizens and Civilizations (Timeline Series)
Fiona Macdonald
1992, Salariya Book Co. Ltd.
paper, $8.00, 47 pp., 0-531-15287-1
The Timeline series of books provides a resource for all students studying individual topics using high interest pictures and easy reading captions. Appropriate for all grades.

The Story of Clocks and Calendars: Marking a Millennium
Betsy Maestro
1999, Lothrop & Lee & Shepard Books
hardcover, $15.95, 50 pp., 0-688-14548-5
This picture book records the history of people marking time. It spans the globe introducing the reader to calendars, clocks, lunar cycles, and astronomy. It is a great resource for all students working on an investigation of the differences and similarities of people.

Social Studies and the Young Learner
National Council for the Social Studies, quarterly journal, membership benefit, $55.00 yearly, 32 pp.
This journal provides a wealth of ideas for the K–6 teacher including field trips, simulations, book reviews, and units. Many of the units and lessons provide ways to enrich lessons for the gifted child. The resources and suggestions connect history to the real world and make it come alive. There is a wide variety of topics and areas of study spanning the elementary grade levels.

Years in Photographs
George Sullivan
1999, Scholastic Inc.
paper, $9.00, 96 pp., 0-590-22858-7
The photos and descriptions in this picture book are organized by decades. This is an excellent way to promote motivation using photos to stimulate curiosity before beginning a unit.

Community Map Kits
Thomas Bros. Maps
paper/kit, $150.00
This map kit is great for a unit on your local community as you can order 35 laminated desk maps and one class map of your own community (28" by 34").

Lewis & Clark
Mary Pat Vargas
2000, Interact Publishing
paper, $56.00, 127 pp., 1-57336346-4
Through this simulation, students learn about the history of the Northwest Passage, explore the geography , and form Corps of their own facing real-life dilemmas. The unit includes National and California standards using games, cooperative group projects, and research. Excellent for grades 5–8.

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

Timetables of History
Bernard Grun, Ed.
3rd ed., 1991, Simon and Schuster
paper, $22.00, 736 pp., 0-671-74271-X
This resource is a must for all students and teachers. Beginning with 4241 BC, this reference shows what was happening simultaneously in the world in seven areas: history and politics; literature and theater; religion, philosophy, and learning; visual arts; music; science and technology; and daily life.

Japanese-American Internment-Life in the Camps: Photo Collection
1999, Jackdaws
photos, $28.00, 12 posters and guidebook
With these primary source pictures, students can discuss various aspects of the Japanese internment experience. They can accompany other primary source documents and literature or serve as an introduction to a role-play activity. A full Jackdaws packet of broadsheets and historical documents is available as well. Grades 6–12.

The Road to the White House: The American System of Representational Democracy
Lisa Kaenzig
2001, College of William and Mary (Center for Gifted Education)
paper, $25.00, 200 pp.
This is a good middle school unit with an in-depth look at democracy and a thought-provoking study of presidential campaigns. It also includes campaign simulations.

Tragedy at Kent State
Bill Lacey
1997, Interact
booklets and teacher's guide, $18.00, 20 pp.
This is one of many Interact re-creations of turning points in 20th century U.S. history. Students relive the confrontation at Kent State and experience different points of view. Each simulation includes background information, script narration and debriefings. It is part of the "Activator" series of simulations that can be completed within one class period.

U.S. History Through Cartoons
1997, Mindsparks
paper, $12.95 per time period, $88.00 complete set
This is a series of cartoons relating to eight different periods of U.S. history: Revolution; The Young Nation; Civil War and Reconstruction; The Gilded Age; The Age of Reform; Prosperity and Depression; World War II; and The Cold War. Overhead transparencies of cartoons are provided along with discussion questions and background for each cartoon. Middle and high school students are challenged to understand the meaning of these historical cartoons.

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Social Education
National Council for the Social Studies, 7 issues yearly, journal, membership benefit, $55.00 yearly
This journal provides valuable information and ideas for middle and high school teachers. Many of the units and lessons provide ways for students to engage in research. Excellent resource for the teacher of gifted students.

Kongo: A Kingdom Divided
Ernest O'Roark and Eileen Wood
2000, National Center for History in the Schools (UCLA)
paper, $12.00, 65 pp.
One of the excellent world history units designed for middle and high school students. In addition to primary source documents and a simulation, short pieces of historical fiction accompany the lessons.

Avenging Angel? John Brown, the Harpers Ferry Raid and the "Irrepressible" Conflict
John Pyne and Gloria Sesso
1999, National Center for History in the Schools (UCLA)
paper, $13.50, 109 pp.
One of a number of excellent American history units for middle and high school students. It includes an excellent collection of primary source documents and a variety of activities that challenge the gifted student.

Apple Pie Music
1994, Queue
CD ROM, $75.00
This CD explores how American music has reflected and expressed various aspects of U.S. culture. In addition to the music itself the CD looks at the different eras of music with text. Almost half the music is from archival recordings with authentic performers. It is excellent for all ages.

Research Comes Alive
Gina Schack and Alane Starko
1998, Creative learning Press
paper, $30.95, 300 pp., 0-936386-75-4
This is the complete book on research. It helps the student and teacher by taking the process one step at a time. It is especially good at demonstrating for students how to conduct original research as an historian. Many activities are included in this book designed for students in grades 7–12.

You Decide! Applying the Bill of Rights to Real Cases
George Smith and Arlene Smith
1992, Critical Thinking Books and Software
software, $23.95, 0-89455-440-9
You decide is excellent for advanced middle school or high school students as it casts students in the role of judges, analyzing, discussing, and deciding actual U.S. Supreme Court cases. The set includes an answer guide with the Court's decisions for 75 cases.

Imperial China and Feudal Japan
Teachers' Curriculum Institute
multimedia kit, $399.00
This comes with excellent interactive activities with superb background information and is perfect for the advanced middle school learner. It includes great instructions for teachers contained in lesson guides, slides, placards, overheads, and an audio tape.

Modern Latin America
Teachers' Curriculum Institute
multimedia kit, $399.00
The kit provides interactive activities with superb background information. It is perfect for the advanced high school learner. It includes great instructions for the teacher with slides and overheads.

Western Europe
Teachers' Curriculum Institute
multimedia kit, $399.00
The kit includes excellent interactive activities for high school students with many ways for a teacher to offer choices for projects. It is well organized with challenging questions offered by the authors.

Decisions Decisions: Immigration
Tom Snyder Productions
1997, multimedia kit, $150.00
This work is appropriate for advanced middle school or high school students who play the role of president of the U.S. facing a recurring dilemma in U.S. history. Students learn to apply the lessons of the history of U.S. immigration policy. It is excellent for discussion and research. The packet includes 25 student reference books, a CD-ROM, and teacher's guide with lesson plans and reproducibles.

Egyptian News (History News Series)
Scott Steedman
1997, Candlewick Press
hardcover, $15.99, 32 pp., 156-402-8739
This fascinating resource for middle school students studying ancient civilizations is presented in the form of a newspaper; students learn about ancient life in the areas of sports, fashion, farming, religion, politics, and building. Others titles in the series include Greek and Roman news; each book inspires students to create their own.

LINDA BRUG teaches AP history at Ventura High School in Ventura, CA. DEBORAH HAZELTON teaches a third-grade GATE cluster at South Oceanside Elementary School in Oceanside, CA. Both are members of the Board of Directors for California Association for the Gifted.

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Meeting Needs of Gifted Underachievers—Individually

BY JOAN FRANKLIN SMUTNY

As noted by the National Excellence report (Ross, 1993), there is a "quiet crisis" in the education of gifted students today—"quiet," because few people raise their voices on behalf of underachieving gifted children in our schools. It could be argued that the "quiet" response has reinforced the crisis and perpetuated a neglect of America's talent in all sectors of society. Research has estimated that about half of all identified gifted students do not perform well academically (National Commission on Excellence in Education 1984; Richert, 1991). This estimate does not include the thousands of gifted who remain unidentified because of underachievement or because of other factors such as poverty, cultural difference (see Peterson, 1999), geographic isolation, or learning disabilities.

What Are the Common Characteristics of Gifted Underachievers?

Researchers recognize that underachievement is a diverse phenomenon with a variety of determinants. Whitmore (1989) identified three broad causes for underachievement in gifted children:

- lack of motivation to apply themselves in school
- environments that do not nurture their gifts and may even discourage high achievement
- disabilities or other learning deficits that mask their giftedness

Children in all three categories tell a similar story. All manifest a discrepancy between potential (as seen from test scores, products, or observations of parents, relatives, or neighbors) and achievement in school. Despite the uniqueness of each individual, a significant number of underachievers respond to similar challenges in more or less similar ways. Commonly cited characteristics of underachieving gifted students include (Van Tassel-Baska, 1992; Whitmore, 1986; Rimm, 1986; Baum, Owen & Dixon, 1991):

- low self-esteem
- consistently negative attitude toward school and learning
- reluctance to take risks or apply one's self
- discomfort with competition
- lack of perseverance
- lack of goal-directed behavior
- social isolation
- weaknesses in skill areas and organization
- disruptiveness in class and resistance to class activities.

My experience in school districts has shown that many educators and administrators do not understand the scope of the under-

"The stereotype of giftedness is still so strong that even the most observant educators tend to equate giftedness with achievement."

achievement phenomenon among gifted students, nor are they likely to recognize it in their own schools. There are two reasons for this. First, the stereotype of giftedness—what it looks like and how it appears in the classroom—is still so strong that even the most observant educators tend to equate giftedness with achievement. A despondent, disorganized, and rebellious student who rarely performs well is typically not thought of as "gifted." Second, even when teachers recognize the potential of a struggling student, they tend to see the underachievement as a problem within the child—rather than as a response to conditions at home or in school. They will make comments to parents such as, "If he'd just apply himself more and stop distracting the rest of the class, maybe he'd get better grades."

What Are the Most Promising Solutions to Underachievement?

Examine the problem individually. Underachievement covers a broad spectrum of situations from a minor school problem with a fairly obvious cause to a more entrenched long-term pattern. Since underachievement is such a varied and complex phenomenon, each case must be examined individually—with no preconceptions. As Hansford (2001, p. 316) observes: "Underachievement is very specific to the individual child; intervention and remediation of underachievement must be individually developed and implemented."

Create a teacher-parent collaboration. Teachers and parents need to work together and pool their information and experience regarding the child. Most interventions in the literature involve parent-teacher collaborations (e.g., Rimm, 1986, 2001), where they can coordinate their efforts and help the child progress more effectively. Some of the questions teachers and parents can explore together are:

- In what areas has the child shown exceptional ability?
- What are the child's preferred learning styles?
- What insights do parents and teachers have about the child's strengths and problem areas?
- What does the child say about self-needs, interests, and school experiences, and how is this information to be interpreted?
- What external factors might be influencing performance in school—culture, bilingualism, gender, family history?
- What factors in school—lack of intellectual challenge, social isolation, difference in learning style and thinking—could cause this withdrawal from school and learning?

This kind of joint exploration yields useful insight into the nature of the child's abilities and the root of the problem.

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Stay focused on the child's gifts. When examining a child's underachievement, always begin by focusing on strengths; a deficiency approach encourages the child to focus on weaknesses even more than before. At each point the investigation needs to find the most effective ways to involve the child in the pursuit and exploration of personal talents and interests. This builds the confidence and strength the child needs to manage problem areas. A gifted underachiever once wrote Sylvia Rimm a letter that expresses perfectly the importance of focusing on the gift:

> I remember you told me to continue and explore my creativity through writing and acting because that is how I would truly find my strengths. I remember how you taught me to manage my life strategically because this would help my confusing and random, inconsistent behavior. I finally remember that you told me to never be afraid to express myself no matter what others thought. (2001, p. 350)

Create an individual plan for the child. The plan designed for the child has to emerge from the nature of individual gifts and the root causes of the underachievement. An underachieving Native American child, for example, who suffers from low skill development due to poverty, inadequate schooling, and low self-esteem needs an individualized program that will provide mentoring in the development of personal gifts, open-ended projects that allow free exploration and divergent thinking, and also special intervention to strengthen skills (Scruggs & Cohn, 1983). Research on culturally different and disadvantaged gifted students has produced a number of effective models (Smutny, 2001a) that educators can use to help reverse underachievement. These models show how factors such as cultural difference and impoverishment lead to underachievement and the kinds of interventions children need to overcome the barriers that have isolated them from their own talents.

In a number of cases, a difference in learning style has hindered the progress of a gifted child. Peterson (2001) points out that creative children have a tendency to underachieve because their thinking style diverges so drastically from the convergent style rewarded by schools. Janos and Robinson state that schools "tend to reward the less original students and may, indeed, exacerbate the problems of some creative children" (Peterson 2001, p. 326). Avoiding competition (Rimm, 1986) and acceleration, these underachievers often improve once they find themselves in classes where they can use their talents in creative thinking, learning, and expression.

"In many respects the absence or presence of advocacy can determine whether or not a child overcomes underachievement."

Creative students need solutions that give them both the freedom to create and the support in skill and organization areas where they are weak. Baum, Renzulli, and Hebert (1995) used Renzulli's Type III enrichment to design an intervention model that addresses the creative needs of gifted underachievers and that also helps them complete projects in a systematic way. In this model, teachers can address individual needs—whether they be limited skills, poor goal-making, or trouble with sequential tasks—without making the child's weaknesses the primary focus or limiting the work options or activities. Research bears out that underachievers—particularly those whose problem is school-based—change for the better when they have a differentiated curriculum with a variety of learning styles and a supportive teacher who values learning over performance (Emerick, 1992; Dweck, 1986).

Rimm's Trifocal Model (1986, 2001) is one of the most comprehensive approaches to underachievement. The model operates on the philosophy that underachievement is learned, and therefore achievement can also be learned. Rimm examines the three major influences on a child's life—home, school, and peer culture—and seeks to understand how these areas contribute to the child's underachievement. Rimm's analysis of the defense mechanisms an underachiever uses to establish "dependent or dominant rituals" (2001, p. 353) provides keen insight into the subtle dynamics between a child and the adults in his life that reinforce a pattern of nonproductive behaviors.

A Final Note—The Importance of advocacy

Each underachieving gifted child has special characteristics, gifts, and challenges that require a unique response. Some form of advocacy has to take place for any solution to work (Smutny, 2001b). Because of their low self-esteem, gifted underachievers need, as Rimm (1986; 2001) points out, mentors or role models with whom the children can identify and in whom they can confide when they face obstacles. Children who do not feel good about themselves have a particularly difficult time sustaining interests or persevering when they have problems. For gifted children, this problem is greatly exaggerated by the heightened sensitivity and insight that accompany giftedness.

This is where advocacy comes in. In many respects the absence or presence of advocacy can determine whether or not a child overcomes underachievement. The children I have seen emerge from difficult school experiences were those who had a special person in their lives who was committed to their success when they were not themselves committed, who cared for them when they felt alone or inadequate, who supported them through all their doubts and fears. The gifted child who wrote to Rimm (2001) credited her with the support, affection, encouragement,

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and wisdom that true advocates bring to their role, and it changed the course of this child's life. This is the quality we all must bring to the gifted underachievers in our schools and homes. ■

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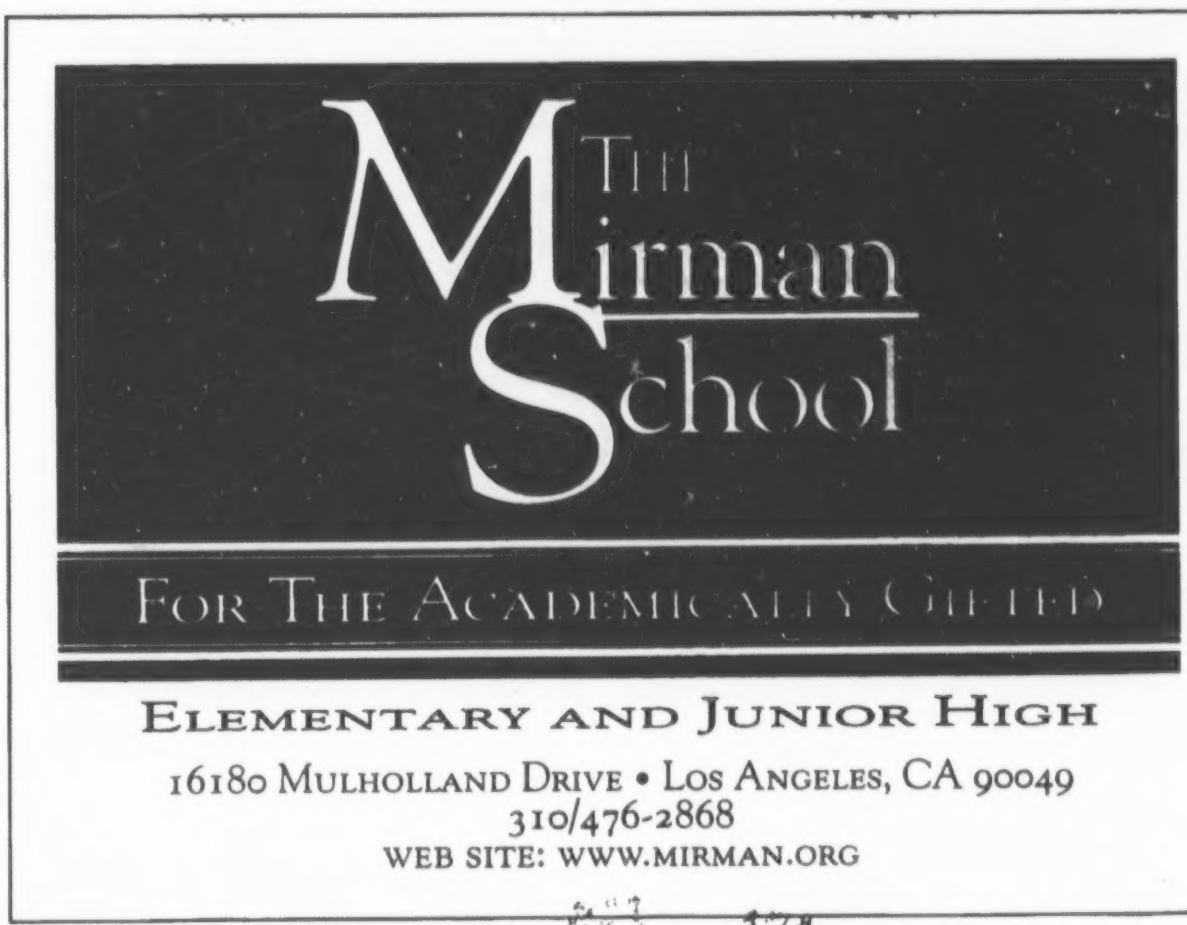

Standards and High Ability Learners: What's a Teacher to Do?

BY CAROL ANN TOMLINSON

The standards movement is engulfing schools across the country like Kudzu spreads in the summer South. It seems to have no natural enemies able to stop its growth, and almost overnight, it's gobbling up school cultures and teacher repertoires. The standards movement and its accompanying high-stakes testing are a presence to be reckoned with, and educators, it seems, are only in the early stages of reckoning!

Like most significant initiatives in education, the standards movement is complex—replete with questions that have no easy answers. Perhaps, some suggest, standards are the best vehicle we have in schools to ensure equity of learning opportunity for all learners and to engage us in a shared conversation about curriculum. Others fear the opposite—a standard way of dealing with a non-standard school population, and the likelihood that all we know of excellent pedagogy will be sacrificed at the altar of test scores.

A short column cannot broach those two viewpoints fully, let alone the convoluted questions and issues that lie beneath the surface of the issues. It is important, however, for teachers to ponder questions that might help us defensibly shape our professional practice in the face of the engulfing vine.

For purposes of *Gifted Education Communicator* and its emphasis on high ability learners, I'd like to pose a broad question and then make a few suggestions for teachers who grapple with a movement generally imposed upon them, but who still wish to do well by their students—including those with advanced performance or potential. Here's the question. "How does a teacher ensure that he or she develops rather than stunts the growth of advanced learners in the face of a standards-based curriculum?"

Suggestions to Consider

In part, whether standards have a more positive or more negative impact has to do with the quality of the standards themselves, in part with the needs of particular learners relative to the standards, and in part with how we craft curriculum and instruction based on standards. The suggestions that follow draw on all those factors.

Classify your standards. Take a look at the standards document you are expected to address. Think about the quality of the standards. It's worth a little time to go down the list of standards and classify them. In the margin beside a particular standard, write an "f" if the standard focuses on acquisition of facts. Write a "c" if the standard focuses on one or more important concepts in the discipline. Write a "p" if the standard helps students understand and grapple with a guiding principle in the discipline. Write an "s1" if the standard focuses on a lower level skill—meaning one derived from knowledge or comprehension level on Bloom's Taxonomy, or one that is taught out of the context of meaning or purpose (for example, the student will write a business letter). Write an "s2" if the standard emphasizes a skill that is at a high cognitive level or a skill that is in the context of meaning (for example, the student will use scientific processes to pose a question that shows understanding of issues related to the environment and to propose a method of seeking solutions). For all students, the standards are richer and more defensible if they are heavy with "c's," "p's," and "s2's." Those standards are designed to help learners understand the essential organization, meaning, and practices of a discipline. All learners benefit from standards of that quality. Certainly bright learners with particular skills or interests in a particular discipline benefit from them. Such standards foster a student's journey toward expertise in the discipline. They are open-ended, abstract, and deal with issues that are fuzzy and curiosity-provoking.

If your standard's document is heavy on "f's" and "s1's," high end learners will be poorly served by a curriculum based solely or largely on those standards—as will virtually all other students. The task of the teacher in that instance is to build a framework of conceptual meaning and purposeful skills into which he or she can integrate the shallow standards. That process takes some time and struggle from teachers. It won't all be finished quickly or with confidence. That's fine. It's called professional growth and comes from grappling with tough issues—in the same way our students

GRAPPLING WITH STANDARDS

Teachers can hang on to standards and also use other approaches for advanced learners by focusing on who they teach and how they teach

grow from that sort of mental struggle. Standards developed by national professional organizations, college textbooks, and experts

CLASSIFYING STANDARDS
Acquisition of facts = f
Important concepts = c
Guiding principles = p
Lower level skills = s1
Higher level skills = 2

in the disciplines are great sources of support as we develop meaningful frameworks for teaching.

Assess students' knowledge of standards. Find out what your students already know about the standards you're teaching—and what they don't know. Chances are, some of your students could pass the standards test before the year begins. We have no right to celebrate end-of-the -year "success" for those students if success means waiting nine months to demonstrate what they knew before the year began. Finding out where students are in their knowledge, understanding, and skill related to the standards gives teachers knowledge and permission to vary instruction based on learner need. A student cannot learn what you teach about the standards if there are huge gaps in that student's prior knowledge and skill. On the other hand, there is nothing for a student to learn if you teach only what that student already knows. Bright kids clearly fall into the latter group with dismaying frequency in schools, and they hunger for the chance to grow outside the box of prescribed curriculum. Many bright learners have gaps in their learning as well, however, and need carefully targeted "outside the box" assistance to fill those holes.

There are few classrooms in this country where it makes sense to forge ahead in covering a curriculum on a lockstep timetable, with identical pedagogy, and xeroxed knowledge for all learners. The notion that a teacher should get every learner to the same point of readiness for the same standardized test administered to everyone on the same day and in the same fashion, makes absolutely no sense to anyone who has taught for a week. The irony, of course, is that we succumb to the pressure and teach as though we embraced the logic. The best we can do is have a sense of where each student is on a learning journey and do whatever we can to move that student forward as efficiently and effectively as possible. Odds are, not only will students be far stronger learners, but standardized test scores will fare better as well.

Teach Standards with a Difference

When students know what we are trying to teach—and we know they do—we need to make an honest professional effort to teach those students things they don't already know! That's so evident that it sounds foolish, but in classrooms across the country every day, kids wait for others to be taught and re-taught things they already know. There are many ways, of course, to extend

"If what we teach causes us to abandon concerns about who we teach and how we teach, we will no longer be teachers."

the learning of advanced students. The National Association for Gifted Children is publishing a curriculum model called the Parallel Curriculum Model. It suggests to us at least four ways we can challenge highly able kids—even in a time of standards.

Hang on to the standards as the essence of the curriculum if that is either the expectation or the wise thing to do pedagogically (which would be the case, for example, with most of the national standards documents created by the key professional groups). But think about one of these approaches for kids who are advanced in their capacity to learn and ahead in learning.

Emphasize key concepts and principles. Teach them the same standard as others, but emphasize the key concepts and principles implicit in the standard. For example, many students in third grade classrooms may create habitats for a particular class of animals. Highly able learners might do the same, but create a museum exhibit that labels, describes and explains each of the key features of the habitat based on the ecosystem in which it is located, and the particular needs of the animal. The teacher's lesson for everyone still focuses on the standard related to understanding a habitat; all students are dealing with habitat features and their suitability for a particular animal. What the teacher has done for advanced learners is to cause them to deal with abstractions more explicitly—to place them in the foreground of thinking and production—and to do so with slightly more complex and multifaceted directions.

Provide connections to contexts beyond the standard. Teach the same standard, but have advanced learners connect it with contexts beyond the standard. For example, a teacher working with the same students on habitats might ask advanced learners to compare the habitats of people and animals in the same ecosystem, looking for both common and dissimilar features—and then to draw a conclusion about habitats for varied members of the same ecosystem. This teacher has asked students to connect two species in the same ecosystem. On the other hand, the teacher might ask these learners to examine how the habitats of the same animal would change before and after land development in their location—once again, drawing conclusions about what they learn. In this instance, the teacher has asked students to compare, not species, but circumstances, or perhaps to look across time periods. A teacher can have all students work with the same standard—but ask advanced learners to make connections (using the facts, vocabulary, concepts, principles, and skills key to the standard and discipline) across times, places, subjects, and cultures.

Ask advanced learners to work like experts in the discipline. Teach the same standard to everyone, but ask advanced learners to work like experts in the discipline. It's important for all learners to simulate what practitioners in a field do in their work. Thus all learners in a class may be involved in studying and gathering data on bird habitats near their school in order to understand the impact on birds of the school and its inhabitants. Advanced learners might develop a position paper on the steps which students, teachers, and administrators should take to make the property a more bird-friendly place. They could draw on data the whole class gathered, look at steps taken in other areas to support bird populations, and make formal recommendations in a format like that of a professional environmentalist. What the teacher has done in this instance is to have these students work in a fashion more like an expert—drawing on more professional level knowledge and skills—while having all students engage in the skills of a

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professional in the discipline.

Allow for reflections on what is learned. Teach the same standard to everyone, but have more advanced learners reflect more fully and deeply on what they learn about themselves by understanding how a professional in a field works. All students in the class might keep reflective journals about their work as researchers, about what they learned from talking with and reading about environmentalists, and how they felt about the match between their own talents and interests and the class work with ecosystems. Advanced learners might work from a more abstract and introspective set of questions. For example: Describe a day in the life of an environmentalist. Now, write a story in which you are the environmentalist. What would your days be like at work. Next, write an analysis and explanation of how you think your talents, skills, interests, and ways of working are or are not a match for the work of an environmentalist. What do you learn about yourself from this exploration? In this instance, the teacher has helped all students think about themselves in relation to the work of a professional, but has asked more advanced learners to take the exploration further—to be more thorough and specific in their analysis.

The Bottom Line

Several years ago in *Phi Delta Kappan*, a colleague of mine, Dan Duke, wrote something I wish I'd thought. In essence it said that excellence is a highly individual concept. It happens on the frontiers of individual growth. He concluded with the line, "The term 'standards of excellence' is an oxymoron."

He's right. The standards movement is here. If we learn as professionals how to teach more effectively using high quality standards (whether they are given to us or we have to craft them), our students and our profession will be well served. On the other hand, if our race to do the impossible and indefensible—make everyone alike by test day—causes us to be less effective teachers than in the past, then the standards movement will be a catastrophe. Worse, we will have let that happen. If what we teach causes us to abandon concerns about who we teach and how we teach, we will no longer be teachers.

The good news is what it always has been. An artful and responsive teacher will teach artfully and responsively regardless of the circumstances—or the degree of challenge those circumstances present. ■

CAROL ANN TOMLINSON is Associate Professor at the University of Virginia and president of the National Association for Gifted Children.

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AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

continued from 18

recollections of their birthdays.

Once completed, A Day In The Life is a project students will want to share with their families and keep in a very special place to pass on to their own children somewhere down life's road.

My Travels: Past, Present, Future

Dr. Mae Jemison is a person of firsts. She was a student of chemical engineering at Stanford at sixteen. She was the youngest medical officer in the Peace Corps. She was the first woman of color in the world to travel into space. Her *Find Where the Wind Goes* is extremely valuable for gifted students as a lesson in how to achieve one's dreams. Moreover, the writing is first rate and the stories are utterly fascinating. One of the outstanding features of the book is the author's recollection of her parents and of how they shattered the stereotypes of gender roles in their own home. They served as wonderful role models to Jemison and her siblings. Equally fine are Dr. Jemison's accounts of how she developed a passion for subjects such as geology and astronomy, reading voraciously and driven by curiosity. Her accounts of of her research for science fairs are fascinating, as are her accounts of medical school, the Peace Corps in Africa, astronaut training, and travel into space aboard the Endeavor. Here is an inspirational story well worth reading by every gifted student. It is an inspiration for how to turn one's gifts into real-life successes, and about facing and meeting obstacles and learning to overcome them.

Mae Jemison's life was a journey in every sense. She was born in Alabama, went to elementary and secondary schools in Chicago, graduated from Stanford University, was a Peace Corps doctor in Africa, and ultimately went into space as a NASA astronaut. Using 8 1/2 by 11 inch outline maps of the United States or the world, have students devise a map legend of symbols that indicate the places of important events in their lives. Where were they born? Where do they live now? Where did they go for their best vacation ever? Where do their grandparents live? Why do they want to go to college? Where do they want to live and work as adults? These maps serve as wonderful props as students share in small groups aspects of their lives, past, present, and future.

Autobiographical Timelines

The winner of the Newbery Medal for *The Whipping Boy* tells the story of his life that in many ways has been much more fantastic than any magic trick he ever dreamed of. Sid Fleischman begins with his boyhood in San Diego and his discovery of the world of magic. It was a passion he held onto for years, indeed becoming a professional magician and writing a book on magic tricks that remained in print for over fifty years. In addition to high points, such as his experiences with family and friends, he also describes the embarrassment of being laughed at when forced to read aloud in his second-grade classroom and failing miserably. Nevertheless, he soon found a passion for reading which translated into a love for writing by the time he reached college at San Diego State College.

Fleischman served in the Navy during World War II and tells would-be young writers how he wove many of these life experiences into his fiction. He has lived an incredibly rich life. He has been a screenwriter for movie projects for John Wayne, a newspaper reporter, a magician, and an award-winning writer of children's literature.

Sid Fleischman's *The Abracadabra Kid: A Writer's Life* is not only great fun to read, but is also highly informative about the writing process. The author provides several pages of writing tips or professional secrets. He shares in a joyful manner how to live a good, clean, exciting, and happy life. Sid Fleischman offers a remarkable timeline of his colorful, rich life.

Learning how to read timelines is an essential social studies research skill, and one way students develop their understanding of them—especially younger students—is to engage them in completing personal timelines. Direct students to tape several pieces of paper together, forming scrolls. (Adding machine tape works well, especially for rough drafts.) Students should place line markers on their scrolls for the number of years they have lived.

Next, they need to do some research. They remember what they did last week, but probably not the events of the first few years of their lives. Did Mom or Dad keep baby books that recorded the ages at which they learned to speak, crawl, and walk? What pranks did they pull during their "terrible twos?" How old were students when they learned to ride a tricycle? What nursery schools did they attend? Who were their first teachers? What did their first report cards say? Each gifted student's timeline will be unique because each youth has a unique and special life story. Timelines should be filled with symbolic words, facts, drawings, and even photographs. Autobiographical timelines are fun for students of all grade levels to create. Be sure to remind students to store them safely, as no doubt they will one day want to share these creative products with their own children.

Self-awareness Maps.

In 1941, Yoshiko Uchida was just months away from graduating with honors from the University of California in Berkeley when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, the United States entered World War II, and her life changed forever. Uchida and her family were among the 120,000 west coast Japanese-Americans who were imprisoned for the duration of the war. She was sent to the Topaz concentration camp in Utah. In *The Invisible Thread*, Uchida, who died in 1992, writes of her tranquil and happy childhood in California in the 1930s, and then of her agonizing and humiliating experiences during World War II. One of the miracles of this memoir is that she writes without rancor and with such tranquillity and poignancy. One of the lessons to be gained by gifted young readers from this most inspirational autobiography is that one can find some good in even the most horrible circumstances. Uchida used her experiences at Topaz as material for her many children's books including *Journey to Topaz* and *The Bracelet*.

Anita's Lobel's autobiography of her experiences as a Jewish child during World War II in Poland is a searing portrait of a stolen childhood and of the degradation Jews faced in Europe during that terrible time. The author was born into an upper middle class family in Krakow, Poland. She was used to a fine home and clothes and toys, and, importantly as it turned out, she had a Catholic nanny, Niania. Lobel was just 5 years old when the Nazis invaded Poland and began to round up Jews for transportation, first to ghettos and then to concentration camps. The family split up immediately for the sake of safety for Lobel and her younger brother.

The children first went to the countryside to hide in their nanny's home, and later hid with her in a Catholic convent. But ultimately the Nazis raided the convent (on Christmas morning) and the children were sent first to the Plaszow, and then to the Auschwitz concentration camps. Food was

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never plentiful, even before the concentration camps and fear of capture was ever-present. In the concentration camps they faced degradation and were constantly cold, hungry, and sick. This is the story of a stolen childhood.

At the end of the war Lobel and her brother were transferred by the Red Cross to Sweden, where they spent the next two years recovering from tuberculosis. Miraculously, all four members of her immediate family survived World War II, and at the end of the memoir, *No Pretty Pictures*, they are arriving in the harbor of New York city, passing the Statue of Liberty to begin a new life in the United States.

Portions of the lives of Yoshiko Uchida and Anita Lobel were horrible and tragic. Yet, as awful as their World War II experiences were, both endured and triumphed as adults. They possessed strength of character, courage, and fortitude. Ask students to examine their own lives. What are their strengths? Do they have weaknesses that they can perhaps overcome? Self-awareness maps offer gifted students opportunities to review their personal qualities, their gifts and talents, and the traits that might be changed or strengthened.

Regardless of age, participants enjoy creating such maps. Begin by displaying and examining a variety of maps: road maps, treasure maps, historical maps, and hand-drawn directions to someone's house. Talk about the things found in maps such as direction indicators, legends, and landmark notations. Then ask students to create autobiographical maps. Do they have mountains of opportunities awaiting them? Are there rivers of strong ambition flowing through their lives? Are there some islands of self-doubt or fear? How about a stream of creativity? What nouns, verbs or adjectives might describe some of the major highways in their lives? What words would be appropriate names for some of the pathways or quiet back roads in their lives? The creation of self-awareness maps is fun and often stimulates insight for the autobiographical cartographers. The sharing of maps with others is a good way to initiate discussions about similarities and differences of interests, talents, experiences, and goals.

Writing An Autobiography

The Norton Book of American Autobiography edited by Jay Parini is a rich collection of memoirs of great breadth and distinction. In his introduction, Parini speaks of autobiography as being an essential American genre, and of Benjamin Franklin's *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (1791) as being the true beginning of American literature. Here is a book for mature gifted students who want to sample some of the greatest writers on the American experience. Here are colonists, slaves, generals, Indian leaders, women's rights advocates, and great authors. All have powerful, enlightening stories to tell and do so brilliantly. Secondary gifted students seeking out good models for autobiography will find none better than these.

The memoirs are presented in chronological order, beginning with Mary Rowlandson's account of her capture by the Wampanoag Indian leader Matocomet in 1676, a full century before the American Revolution. Her account was first published in 1682. Her story is followed by autobiographical accounts by Puritan minister Jonathan Edwards, Benjamin Franklin, Black Hawk, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Henry David Thoreau, Frederick Douglass, Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Helen Keller, Richard Wright, and so on through contemporaries such as Joyce Carol Oates, Annie Dillard, and Sherman Alexie. Because the list of writers is so extensive and so distinguished, there is something for every reader in this fine collection.

Electronic Resources

An increasing number of children's authors and illustrators have web sites that contain first-person accounts of their lives, work habits, and works-in-progress. When readers have access to computers and the Internet, tremendous opportunities are open to them for new learning. The best general site is The Children's Literature Web Guide from the University of Calgary: ***www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/.*** Jan Brett, Madeleine L'Engle, Jean Craighead George, Eric Carle, Virginia Hamiliton, Dave Pilkey, Katherine Paterson, Patricia Polacco, and Leo and Diane Dillon are among the many authors and illustrators whose web pages can be accessed through the Calgary site, and this site has hundreds of links to others as well.

The culminating activity or adventure of this project may well be to have students write their own autobiographies. Elementary and middle school students have not lived long lives, but each has a personal story that is worth recalling and describing.

Students who have participated in any of the activities will be primed to write their autobiographies and will probably have little trouble beginning the task. Even so, it may be helpful to provide them with at least a basic outline, both for collecting data and for outlining and organizing the information. One possible outline to share with stu-

STUDENT AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

Chapter 1: Background
- family name, history, and background
- information about parents

Chapter 2: My arrival
- I join the family, when and where?

Chapter 3: The early years: Part 1
- my first toys, first words, first steps, first tooth
- first punishment

Chapter 4: The early years: Part II
- favorite toys or games, pets, nursery school, special birthdays
- my favorite baby sitter

Chapter 5: Kindergarten days
- most memorable kindergarten experience
- my kindergarten teacher was

Chapter 6: The primary grades
- teachers, friends, school plays, report cards
- early activities: Cub Scouts, Brownies

Chapter 7: Middle grades
- new friends, favorite classes, learning to play a band instrument, soccer, starting ballet lessons
- the games we play on my city block

Chapter 8: My family
- parents, siblings, cousins, grandparents
- homes and places where I have lived
- family trips and reunions
- family traditions I like

Chapter 9: Leisure time
- my friends
- favorite things to do
- things that occupy my time

Chapter 10: The proudest moment of my life
- the neatest thing I have done

Chapter 11: My future plans
- education, career
- family aspirations

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dents is shown in the accompanying sidebar.

Obviously teachers and parents may add to or delete from this list as seems appropriate, based upon factors such as age and circumstances. Teachers working with younger children will most likely want to involve parents in helping children write their autobiographies. From their own memories and experiences, and through the use of baby books, parents will be able to help students with the earliest chapters in their autobiographies. Parents will also be especially helpful in locating and lending students photographs of themselves to illustrate their autobiographies.

Although most autobiographies have been penned by adults, there are some notable exceptions. One of the best by a young person is *Adam Moore's Broken Arrow Boy*, a prize winner in the "Written & Illustrated By..." competition (Landmark Editions, 1402 Kansas Avenue, Kansas City, MO 64127), an exemplary contest for gifted student authors and illustrators. Students may also find *Anthony Reynoso: Born to Rope* appealing. Although actually written by Martha Cooper, Anthony's story is told entirely in the first person.

Documentary photographer Jill Krementz has created an entire series of autobiographical books such as *A Very Young Gardener.* Six-year-old Ashley is a gardener, and spring is her favorite time of year. Ashley is shown growing flowers from seed and also going to the garden center. She has two gardens: one for flowers and one for vegetables. Through splendid color photography by Krementz, readers see Ashley work her garden through the summer, reap the benefits of her work in the fall, and even enjoy her windowsill garden in the winter. In *A Very Young Musician,* ten-year-old Josh Broder is learning to play the trumpet as well as music theory, and participating in improvisational jam sessions. In this photo-essay, written as an autobiography, Josh introduces his family, his fifth-grade class, and his school jazz band, and takes readers with him to Interlochen, the internationally famous music camp in northern Michigan. This book too can serve as a great model for upper elementary gifted students who want to tell their own stories.

Conclusion

Autobiographies provide today's gifted students with fine reading opportunities. They serve both to inspire young people and as models of what young writers may emulate in creating their own memoirs. Good writing serves as both entertainment and as example. The questions famous writers pose and answer may provoke today's young writers to consider similar inquiries. The example of blending both art and words to tell one's life story may similarly motivate young writers to illustrate their memoirs.

Autobiographical reading, research, and writing activities may lead students of all ages to a better understandings of and appreciation for their own special gifts. Autobiography for students should always be celebrations. It should be a celebration of the diversity of humanity, even within the microcosm of one classroom.

Autobiography also awakens and reminds students of the obligation their gifts entail—to use these as productively and creatively as possible. One of the most gifted choreographers of the twentieth century summed it up best:

> *You are unique and so am I. If you do not fulfill that uniqueness, it is lost to the world. No matter how uncomfortable it may be, you must pay your debt to the life that has been permitted you. And do it with as much courage as possible.*
>
> —*Martha Graham*

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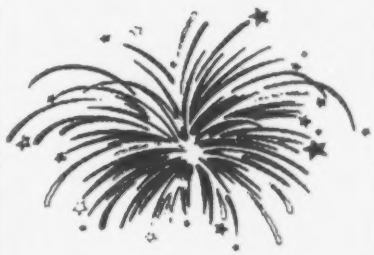

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CHALLENGES OF TEACHING SOCIAL STUDIES

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Global Connections for Young Learners

Teachers in the early grades (1–4) may decide to focus on the NCSS standard related to Global Connections as young learners become aware of others living in the world, and develop an understanding that events in other parts of the world influence their lives. This awareness is important as social studies content prepares young learners for civic competencies in a rapidly changing multicultural world. Globalization is a fact and cannot be ignored. The social studies curriculum needs to teach about diverse people and perceptions by developing knowledge based on interconnections of the world, life experiences, complexity of people, and skills including perspective consciousness, open-mindedness, and resistance to stereotyping (Merrifield and Subedi, 2001, 278).

Young learners are curious about their world and ask a multitude of questions about a range of topics of particular interest to them. They may ask, "Who lives on the other side of the world?" or "Why is it dark at night?" or "Why do trees grow tall?" and thousands of other questions to satisfy their curiosity.

Many teachers in the early grades have developed instructional units on self, family, neighborhood, or community that provide a content base for the asking of even more questions. After initial enthusiasm for the unit topic being studied, it is not uncommon for gifted children to become bored and pay less attention in class as their minds wander to other topics of current interest.

For example, suppose a cluster of gifted students representing different cultures and traditions are assigned to a single, early-grade classroom. In studying about self and family, talented students want to know more about their own lives and family backgrounds, family traditions and customs, culture, countries of origin, and other related "why," "how," "when," "what," and "where" questions. Since students in the early grades are likely to have limited reading and writing skills, the use of oral history as an instructional strategy is likely to be appropriate. Children decide on a series of questions to elicit responses from family members, neighbors, and others. After gathering the requested information, children share their findings with classmates. This sharing of information contributes to classmates' knowledge about several other cultural or national groups.

Gifted children should be asked to extend their knowledge and thinking skills beyond so-called basic information content and encouraged to stretch their intellectual capacities. For example, they could be asked to draw maps of their family homeland or home area; tell stories describing family background and include pictures or drawings of special people; share artifacts, traditions, and customs; and tell about interesting parts of their culture or country that intrigued them while gathering information. To extend the lesson, students could be asked a series of "what if" questions about the cultures and countries studied. For example, "What if there were no fast food restaurants in your culture or country?" or "What would your life be like if you lived in your culture or country at present?"

In addition, students could write imaginary conversations or dialogues between themselves and other people from the cultures or countries studied; or write poems, songs, fictional stories, or television or radio scripts; draw pictures of various local scenes (activities) or buildings; create flags, dances, murals, or mobiles; or role play incidents that may have occurred (or could occur) in their countries. These activities are suggested as ways to encourage student creativity and to extend learning beyond the walls of the classroom. Some students will probably involve their parents or others in the learning activities thereby encouraging them to become involved in the school. The lesson described above with various modifications can be used with the whole class or with gifted children to encourage and extend their learning to the larger community "outside the box" (adapted from Smutny and colleagues, 1997).

Changing Patterns for Middle Grades

Social studies teachers in the middle grades (5–8) often want students to develop an awareness of changing political, social, and economic patterns as young people study future trends and consider future images. The NCSS standards Time, Continuity, and Change (history), Individuals, Groups, and Institutions (sociology), and Science, Technology, and Society (interdisciplinary) have implications for teaching about future and future changes.

The world is constantly changing and values related to the past, now, and the future need to be explored. Young people are interested in the future and think about what future changes mean to them personally, to their families, and to society in general. It is important that students consider the ways in which anticipated changes may impinge upon their rights, life styles, and goals. Change is life itself.

Over thirty years ago Alvin Toffler wrote the book *Future Shock* (1970) which offered various scenarios for future changes. Toffler suggested the likelihood of subterranean cities, development of impermanence and a throw-away society, creation of Monday–Friday friendships, invention of more powerful computers and other technologies resulting in information overload, fractured families, and other significant changes (Toffler, 1970). Students should be invited to read *Future Shock* or a teacher-prepared packet of related reading selections and to create a list of "shocks" suggested by Toffler.

After constructing a list of "shocks," students should identify which predicted changes have already taken place and then determine their impact on society in general and their impact on their personal lives. Using five of these changes, have students rank order their importance to individual students or to the community in general. After a discussion of the "shocks" or changes, small groups of students should work to achieve a consensus on a priority ranking, if possible, and indicate reasons for their rankings. Students should also describe the thinking and reasoning processes they used in making decisions. If a consensus of priorities cannot be achieved, a "minority" report should be prepared indicating why a consensus could not be achieved. (Agreement is not the primary goal in this activity, but rather, it is meant to encourage students to use their creative thinking and reasoning skills in problem-solving.)

Students may also be asked to discuss positive and negative aspects of the social and technological changes predicted by Toffler. Questions could include: "To what extent do you (the student) think these changes will be accepted or rejected by future generations?" "Why is it likely that people in the next half century will remember the past with nostalgia and enjoy discussing the way it used to be as they reflect on the past?" "What reasons might they offer for their responses?" "What are some of the unintended consequences of those changes?" "What additional 'shock' changes might be anticipated in the future and what will be their likely impact on future society?" (adapted from Stewart, 1985).

High School Emphasis on People, Places, and Environment

Currently high school social studies teachers (9–12) often utilize large chunks of instructional time which they teach in 90- to 100-minute blocks of time several times each week. Given the longer class periods, teachers often restructure their course goals, content, and selection of instructional activities. Usually they include the use of several instructional activities during the extended time block and/or they may include in-depth projects which are especially suitable for gifted students.

At times social studies teachers may decide to develop an integrated learning activity in cooperation with the languages arts teacher. The social studies teacher may decide to use the standard People, Places, and Environments and the standard Individual Development and Identity. Appropriate language arts standards related to reading several types of genres and using writing in various forms are also identified.

A recommended theme or topic is that of King Arthur since there are many versions and interpretations of his life and times. In fact, there are ongoing discussions and research studies as to whether or not King Arthur really existed, and if so, whether or not it was in the fifth or sixth century. Students may be assigned to read one of the following or other versions of King Arthur and determine how the authors or film makers portray Arthur and his followers.

Sir Thomas Malory wrote *Le Morte d'Arthur* in the 15th century in English although the title is in French; T. H. White wrote *The Book of Merlyn* as a part of the five-volume series known as *The Once and Future King*; and Alfred Lord Tennyson wrote *Idylls of the King* in the 1800s as still another version of the life of King Arthur. Geoffrey Ashe contributed to the Arthurian literature by writing *The Discovery of King Arthur* in 1985.

Class discussions should bring out different perspectives as students consider the historical, geographic, and cultural settings and context of the story. Is it likely that people who lived during this historical time frame responded in the ways people described in the story respond? Why might different authors writing about the same story offer more than one perspective? How are the stories similar? How are they different? What part(s) of the story could be true? What part might be fiction?

After further discussion and dialogue, students may wish to write their own version of King Arthur—including pictures, drawings, and perhaps music—and then share their original work with classmates and perhaps others in a public setting (e.g., parent teacher meetings or with younger children at school assemblies). The new versions should include information about the geographic terrain, castles, historical context, clothes, and recreation. They should also include Arthur's influence on those around him, his own self-image, and so forth. Students and teachers who decide to include this or a similar learning activity are limited only by their own imagination and creativity.

Clearly there is an abundance of important social studies content available for gifted students to experience in programs at all grade levels. Quality learning experiences including fast-paced instruction offer gifted students challenging opportunities to learn. Gifted students can have high-level intellectual exchanges and interactions with key ideas, and at the same time develop and use their critical, logical, and creative thinking skills. They can expand their communication skills at the same time. During their K–12 school years, gifted students should have an opportunity to study social studies content drawn from synoptic, behavioral, and policy studies as preparation for assuming active citizenship responsibilities in subsequent years. ■

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HISTORY MATTERS

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> You see, we had to live so dangerously down there. My mother told me, said, "Son, I know you're a good boy. You don't, haven't given me any trouble, but if they ever put their hand on you they'll trump up something, and they'll never let you get away." and I knew that.

You can read documents by and about Marcus Garvey, black nationalism, and the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), including the celebratory song "The Black Star Line," and criticism by integrationists such as W.E.B. DuBois and Robert Bagnall. You can read the debate about the "bobbed-hair craze" or explore the influence of this new style through a Mexican-American song. Text documents also include the last words of the Haymarket Martyrs, letters home from Polish immigrants, and historian William Langer's recollections of trench warfare in World War I. Primary documents allow students to explore politics and polling, to study the impact of religion on American society, to listen to a blues song written after the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, or to read a ballad by Bonnie Parker of the notorious team of Bonnie and Clyde.

Making Sense of Evidence

Finding primary documents, however, is only half the challenge. Teaching students to analyze and contextualize documents, to place them within the larger context of American history, is another thing entirely. Making Sense of Evidence offers engaging interactive exercises to help students explore the historian's craft. For example, photographs are valuable historical resources, but they must be studied critically as interpretations rather than as "facts." One interactive exercise examines the problem of photographs as historical evidence. Viewers explore how Farm Security Administration (FSA) photographers Walker Evans and Dorothea Lange created both their famous and less well-known images—from choosing subjects and determining how to frame them to altering them for presentation. Like other forms of historical evidence, these images reflect the views of their creators as well as the intended audiences. Another exercise investigates how film narratives have changed since the earliest days of the medium, while a third allows students to analyze music and race at the turn of two centuries. An upcoming activity will address strategies and tools for reading historical cartoons.

Learner Guides

In addition, a series of Learner Guides is being developed in collaboration with the Visible Knowledge Project at Georgetown University. These guides will provide background and strategies for using various primary sources. Some guides will be available in a traditional written format with a bibliography of related Web resources. Other guides will experiment with an interactive, multimedia format. The first set of written guides will explore the specifics of using oral history, photographs, letters and diaries, and early film for research and teaching. The first interactive guides will emphasize the strategies and techniques used by scholars to read, interpret, and contextualize primary sources in various formats—including fiction, speeches, songs, political cartoons, and photographs. These guides will be useful to teachers in several ways. You can use them to learn new ideas for incorporating traditional and non-traditional sources into the classroom. And, you can send students to the guides to learn how to use a multitude of documents.

Classroom teaching Tools

Several features of History Matters directly address the classroom needs of social studies teachers, from syllabi and lesson plans, to formats for displaying student work through new media.

Digital Blackboard

Many teachers have asked for examples of successful Web-based assignments. Digital Blackboard offers more than 40 teacher-tested lesson plans drawn from individual teachers and from such respected institutions as the Library of Congress and the National Archives and Records Administration. It helps teachers use the Internet to communicate and share lesson ideas: What lessons work and why? What tools can be applied to other lessons? How can teachers successfully introduce difficult and controversial topics?

For example, a lesson plan submitted by Carl Schulkin (1998), a high school history teacher in Kansas City, Missouri, is entitled "Utilizing the Registers of Free Blacks for the City of Staunton and Augusta county, Virginia, 1803-1864." It was designed to teach students the process of analyzing primary sources and to enrich their knowledge of the daily lives of free African Americans in the antebellum South. Schulkin begins by asking,

> What important conclusions can be drawn from examining sets of very brief primary source documents? What are the limitations of such sources? How does one utilize quantitative data in an effort to answer qualitative historical questions? What other sources of information are needed in order to place a set of primary source documents into the proper historical context?

Bill Friedheim at Borough of Manhattan Community College created the lesson "Instructions to All Persons of Japanese Ancestry" to deepen student understanding of the experience of Japanese internment in the United States during world War II and to promote student-centered collaborative inquiry. "The WPA 'Life Histories' Website: Between the Wars," developed by Bill Tally of the Center for Children and Technology, aims to help students examine differences in American life between the 1930s and the 1990s. As part of the New Deal, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) paid unemployed writers to compile "life histories" of ordinary Americans. Students explore a specific subject as three ordinary Americans described it, and consider ways that other people's views differ from their own.

Syllabus Central

This feature of History Matters provides another forum for sharing information, in this case through annotated syllabi. These syllabi explain creative approaches to teaching, with particular emphasis on using technology and developing innovative ways to organize the teaching of standard history and social studies.

For example, Professor David Jaffee of The City College, The City University of New York, shares and annotates the syllabus from his course "U.S. Society 101." He explains his efforts to integrate new media into his course: "I have been most interested in having students see images as historical evidence and as historical forces rather than as mere illustrations." He shares his successes and frustrations (often caused by limited technical support), and reflects on the course overall:

> I would say my teaching has had to become both more structured and more open with the use of new media. The need to organize multimedia materials and focus assignments has introduced more structure in my teaching, but the ability to let the students locate materials on their own and compare their findings with each other has made for a more open teaching format.

Students as Historians

As teachers begin to incorporate new media into social studies classrooms, there is increasing interest in making these projects visible and available for fellow students, families, and communities, and as models for other teachers. Students as Historians presents examples of the kinds of projects students, from high school to graduate school, have done on the Internet. Topics range from an exploration of the U.S. Capitol as an American icon to oral histories of women who lived before, during, and after the Second World War.

In one example, students at South Kingston High School worked with the Brown University Scholarly Technology group to create the website, "The Whole World Was Watching: An Oral History of 1968." In spring 1998, twenty high school sophomores conducted oral histories with thirty Rhode Islanders about their recollections of the year 1968, creating "a living history of one of the most tumultuous years in United States history." The site contains transcripts, audio recordings, and edited stories, as well as a glossary, timeline, bibliography, and notes from the organizers. Project coordinator Linda Wood writes, "Together, the students and the narrators constructed a unique document, a record of the past as remembered in the present." She reflects that students who thought that history was boring

> were turned on by their direct involvement in the stories of people who were there as events occurred. Oral history is an example of the best kind of learning because it actively engages the students, using their natural curiosity about other people to provide an emotional context too often missing from textbook lessons. (www.stg.brown.edu/projects/1968)

Puzzled by the Past

Equally important for engaging students is the notion that studying history and social studies can and should be fun. In that spirit, History Matters offers a regular quiz, "Puzzled By the Past." The October 2000 pre-election puzzle, for example, invited visitors to connect third party candidates with their parties. Earlier puzzles have investigated intelligence tests from the 1920s or challenged viewers to find inaccuracies in historical photographs. An archive of past puzzles contains both the puzzles and their answers.

Professional Development and Resources

While placing student work and teaching tools on the Web begins to strengthen the educational community, classroom teachers still frequently feel isolated—cut off from fellow teachers as well as from academic developments. History Matters offers several features that seek to alleviate these feelings by helping social studies teachers connect with others working on similar topics at high schools, community colleges, colleges, and universities around the world. It provides models of excellent teaching, forums for discussing history topics with leading scholars, and a series of essays that helps answer the eternal student questions: "Why should I care about history?" and "How does it affect me today?"

Secrets of Great History Teachers

This feature consists of a series of interviews in which distinguished teachers share their strategies and techniques. High school, community college, and university teachers offer their perspectives on what drew them to teaching history and social studies, what they find exciting about teaching, and how they engage students in active learning about the past. Philip Bigler, the 1998 National teacher of the Year and a history teacher at thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Northern Virginia, discusses his favorite classroom assignments for making history come alive: "lots of historical simulations where students stage presidential elections, debate great issues... recreate the trial of John Brown, etc...." He also shares his goals and strategies of teaching the survey:

> I try to make sure the students have good outside readings that make history come alive. We do just about everything. You also have to change your instruction to the personality of a class. It is different year to year and I think that is what is most exciting about education today.

In another recent interview, Leon Litwack, the Pulitzer-Prize winning historian who has taught more than 30,000 students during the past thirty years at the University of California, Berkeley, reveals how he first developed an interest in history:

> [It] began with the education imparted by my neighborhood and my immigrant parents....I came to be fascinated by the story of how my parents came to this country from Russia (and ultimately hitchhiked out to California) and by the experiences of my neighbors, most of them immigrants from Mexico. My neighborhood then, exposed me to a diversity of cultures, languages, and histories. I thought it to be a unique and valuable education. But I found nothing about their experiences in my courses in social studies and history.

Litwack discusses his passion for teaching the survey and his dedication to making history come alive, even in large lecture courses, since "for most of the students [it is] perhaps the only history course they will take in college. That is the challenge. I have one chance at them, one opportunity to engage them in the study of the past.

Talking History

Talking History is a more interactive feature than the former, offering social studies teachers the opportunity to engage with leading teachers and scholars on teaching key subjects covered in social studies courses. In October 2000, professor James Horton of George Washington University introduced a forum on African American history by stating that

> after three decades of teaching African American history and issues related to race in America, I am still sometimes taken off-guard by my students. Even at the beginning of the 21st century, they are often surprised, fascinated, even shocked, when we discuss the history of African Americans. Sometimes outraged, they demand to know why they haven't heard this story before.

Teachers from a wide range of schools

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and backgrounds actively participated in the forum, shaping the discussion and raising issues such as the role of African American history within the larger context of U.S. history. Topics ranged from reparations for the descendants of slaves to a discussion of teaching slavery in elementary schools; from classroom and teaching resources to the debate over the Willie Lynch letter. In the last example, a fraudulent document, reportedly a speech to Virginia slaveholders in 1712, circulated widely on the web and incited passionate debate. Talking History provided a forum for discussing the content of the letter, the need to question sources, and one respondent's strategies for testing the letter's validity (Rosenzweig, forthcoming).

Messages from previous forums—covering topics such as Asian American history, the U.S. Constitution, women's history, and the vietnam War era—are well archived. Forums for the 2000-2001 year include discussions with Emily Rosenberg on American Imperialism (December 2000); David Montgomery on Labor History (March 2001); and Alan Brinkley on the Depression and the New Deal (April 2201). For the 2001-2002 academic year, look for discussions with Fred Hoxie on Native American History, Eric Foner on Reconstruction, Tom Bender on Internationalizing U.S. History, Linda Gordon on Family History, and Christine Heyman on Religious History.

Past Meets Present

When adults were asked to describe their experiences with history classes in elementary or high school, a nationwide representative sample responded most frequently with the word "boring." (Rosenzweig & Thelen, 1998). Yet social studies teachers know that the past is far form boring—it is exciting, challenging, and most important, relevant. In Past Meets Present, prominent scholars engage with some of today's most controversial topics and discuss them in light of the past. You can read an analysis by Eric Foner in which he discusses the controversies surrounding the film *Amistad*, exploring the problems faced by the film's producers and the historical shortcomings of the film and its accompanying study guide. Foner also raises questions about the messages behind Hollywood's portrayal of history as entertainment.

Or, you can follow a discussion of sweatshops past and present by Harry Rubinstein and Peter Liebhol, in which they place the current debate on sweatshops in historical context and explore the complex factors that contribute to their existence today. Current and upcoming Past Meets Present essays compare the politics of the two presidential impeachment trials and examine the historical context for such hot contemporary topics as the Second Amendment, capital punishment, national drug policies, and the electoral college.

Reference Desk

Finally, a Reference Desk serves as a gateway to quality websites for information about using new media in the classroom. Prescreened, annotated links lead to valuable resources on citing digital resources, understanding copyright and fair use laws and how they apply to classroom practices, evaluating digital materials, and addressing national and state history and social studies standards.

In Conclusion

Each feature of History Matters offers valuable information and ideas for teaching history and social studies. Taken all together, this website creates an interactive community of history and social studies teachers, offering opportunities for teachers to engage in dialogue with leading scholars and share suggestions with each other about how best to use both Web and non-Web resources to teach U.S. history effectively.

History Matters is committed to improving the teaching of history and social studies in a free, non-commercial environment, as schools, teachers, and students learn to access and manipulate new media. The resources on History Matters reflect a commitment to teaching about the lives of ordinary Americans, to engaging students in the analysis and interpretation of primary documents about the past, and to making the Internet a vehicle for democratizing education. To that end, History Matters encourages social studies teachers to submit any suggestions, syllabi, lesson plans, or student projects that might benefit other teachers.

History Matters recently received a substantial grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and is currently expanding its contents. This expansion will add hundreds of new website annotations and primary source documents, dozens of new online assignments, a new series of topical discussions, new interactive activities, and many other features. In addition to a myriad of new images allowing students a visual glimpse at various aspects of life throughout American history, History Matters will also add new interviews on teaching secrets and strategies, new syllabi and lesson plans, and a new puzzle every other month. ■

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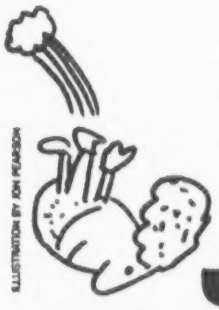

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Diving Into Word Play with Gifted and Talented Students

BY SUSANNAH RICHARDS

J.R.R. Tolkien spent his whole life wondering about language. His love of language led him to create a language of Elvish, a highly detailed language with its own vocabulary, grammar, history and poetry. Since there was no one with whom he could speak Elvish, he created an imaginary land called Middle Earth complete with good-natured, small, fat, hairy-footed creatures that he shared with the world in a fantasy called *The Hobbit*.

Many gifted and talented students have an interest in words and language, but few teachers capitalize on this interest. There are many activities teachers can use to stimulate a fascination with words and language. Such activities can be used to create an interest and excitement in words that will enrich the lives of students and provide teachers with a direction for planning process skills learning. For those gifted and talented students who may be like John Marsden, who once said, "I collect words wherever I go and rejoice in their beauty or despair over their poverty," here are a few suggestions to send your students on meaningful word adventures.

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INNOVATIVE IDEAS FOR WORD PLAY	STUDENT ACTIVITIES
Read Books about Word Play *The Word Eater* by Mary Amato is an intriguing book for anyone who thinks that we can do without words. In it, Lerner Chanse finds a worm, Flip, who has an appetite for words. When Flip eats a word, it disappears. Students can be asked to consider the ramifications of what happens when both words and the corresponding items disappear. For example, what happens when Flips eats the oxygen right out of her science experiment? Follow-up activities can be used to enhance this wonderful story.	• Create a list of words that you think would be O.K. for Flip to eat; justify your answers. • Develop a cause-and-effect story that focuses on the disappearance of a word. For example, what if "eat" were to disappear?
Picture Books about Word Play For the mathematically talented student who loves words, *G is for Googol* is a mathematical vocabulary feast. Twenty-six high-level mathematical terms from abacus to zillion are presented with their definitions and relationship to the mathematical world.	• Create a concept map showing the relationships of some related mathematical terms. • Write an alphabet book focusing on math vocabulary.
Word Puzzles to Introduce Word Play Teachers can use word puzzles designed to stimulate word play. For sample word puzzles, *Plexers* by Dave Hammon, Tom Lester, and Joe Scales, provides students with an opportunity to practice their analytical skills and learn new phrases. It also encourages students to examine their thinking processes (or metacognition) in relation to others. How a student solves a word puzzle is a reflection of problem-solving ability. What are the strategies that the students used to solve the puzzles? Students might benefit from a "think aloud" where they work out the relationship based on the presented information as in the classic: MAN BOARD Students might also examine how words are presented. They might ask themselves how the visual presentation adds information to aid in the interpretation of the puzzle. For example, in the puzzle, **tiVaine**, one can see that Val is in tine so the word must be Valentine. *Plexers and More Plexers*, *Games Magazine* and *Games Magazine* books are wonderful sources for word puzzles.	• Diagnose the relationships among words in the list provided. • Develop your own word puzzles by creating visuals using the words in the list. A few phrases that lend themselves to word puzzles are: Cat in the Hat, falling star, don't cry over spilt milk, wish upon a star, American Revolution, sleep under the covers, and six of one half, half a dozen of the other.

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INNOVATIVE IDEAS FOR WORD PLAY	STUDENT ACTIVITIES
Use Complex Vocabulary to Introduce Word Play Complicated vocabulary comes to life in *The Weighty Word Book* by Paul M. Levitt, Douglas Burger, and Elissa S. Guralnick. In this book, 26 vocabulary words from abasement to zealot are brought to life with a short story that uses a pun to illustrate the word's meaning. For example, "when people are stubborn, like Polly, who left home to become a dog-mat tick, those people are called dogmatic."	· Choose a vocabulary word to feature in a story. Be sure you understand the meaning of the word and it's context before you create a complete story to explain it.
Diagnose Career-Related Words To introduce a unit on careers, discuss the meaning of –ology (a branch of learning) and ography (the study of). Although students may have heard the term, archaeology, they may not know that it is the study of the past through materials and remains. Check out the Internet web page of **www.ology.amnh.org/** for information on different types of -ologies and -ologists.	· Generate a list of -ologies and -ographies with their related meanings. · Create a list of humorous names for people in different professions. For example, would you want to have Dr. Grippo pull your teeth? Would you trust a wedding planner who is Mary Bliss or Dr. Speck the optometrist?
Humorous Stories to Introduce Words Sometimes students attach the wrong meaning to a word as demonstrated by Sage in *Miss Alaineus: A Vocabulary Disaster*. This clever story is a perfect place to begin using humor to teach new words.	· Design a costume to illustrate the meaning of a word for a vocabulary parade. · Describe an event in which you turned a mistake into something good.
Use Cartoons and Art to Stimulate an Interest in Words For those who are fascinated by symmetry, Jon Agee's trio of palindrome books may hit the spot: *Go Hang a Salami! I'm a Lasagna Hog! and Other Palindromes, So Many Dynamos! and Other Palindromes, Sit on a Potato Pan, Otis! More Palindromes.* Agee, a frequent contributor to the *New Yorker*, has a wonderful sense of humor that appeals to highly able learners who are interested in cartooning and art. Each palindrome is illustrated with an image that brings the palindrome to life.	· Construct your own palindromes. You might build your palindromes from the inside out, or play with groups of letters that spell different words forward and backward.
Invent Words to Stimulate an Interest in Word Play Who says that we can't make up our own words? Authors have always created new words just as Lewis Carroll did in *Jabberwocky*. J. K. Rowling has had a lot of success with the words she invented; consider your status as a muggle. William Shakespeare invented almost 2000 words and expressions, many of which are commonly used today. In this age of technology there are hundreds of new words that have only recently become a part of our vocabulary. Remember when surfing was done in the water? Going one step further than inventing words, Tolkien invented the language of Elvish, and Klingon is the language for Star Trek.	· Research the origin of these and other expressions that Shakespeare added to the English Language. fortune-teller, fair play, horn-book, lady-bird, watch-dog, hot-blooded mimic, zany, long-legged, never-ending · Identify the patterns that make up Elvish, Klingon, or another invented language. · Invent a new language of your own.

Books and Resources to Support Word Explorations

The Word Eater
Mary Amato
2000, Holiday House, ISBN: 082341-468X

The Best of an Almanac of Words at Play
William Espy
1999, Merriam-Webster, ISBN: 0877791457

A Children's Almanac of Words at Play
William R. Espy
1982, Random House, ISBN: 0517564602

Miss Alaineus: A Vocabulary Disaster
Debra Frasier
2000, Harcourt, ISBN: 0152021639

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The Young Writer' s Companion
Sarah Ellis
1999, Groundwood Books, ISBN: 088894117

Plexers and **More Plexers**
Dave Hammon, Tom Lester, & Joe Scales
1983, Dale Seymour
ISBN: 0866511105, ISBN: 0866511113

Word Circus: A Letter-Perfect Book
Richard Lederer
1998, Merriam-Webster, ISBN:0877793549

The Weighty Word Book
Paul M. Levitt, Douglas Burger, and Elissa S. Guralnick
2000, Court Wayne Press, ISBN: 1570983135

New Directions in Creativity (Five volumes including Mark A, B, 1, 2, 3)
Joseph Renzulli, Carolyn Callahan, Linda Smith, Mary Renzulli, and Barbara Ford
2000, Creative Learning Press
Mark A (K–1) - ISBN 0936386797
Mark B (2–3) - ISBN 0936386800
Mark 1 (3–5) - ISBN 0936386819
Mark 2 (4–6) - ISBN 0936386827
Mark 3 (5–8) - ISBN0936386835

G is for Googol: A Mathematical Alphabet
David Schwartz, illustrated by Marissa Moss
1998, Tricycle Press, ISBN: 1883672589

—Susannah Richards

My Short List of Essential Teacher Traits

BY SHIRLEY CHING

No educational program is great without great teachers. But knowing what constitutes greatness is half the battle. Is there an archetype that new teachers of the gifted can use as a model? Does a teacher of the gifted have to be gifted? Experts in the field have compiled lists of "must have" characteristics for teachers of the gifted. Parents and students have their own lists. If all the lists were combined, we'd have the profile of a brilliant, charismatic teacher with impeccable character and endless patience.

It is difficult, impossible actually, to be everyone's idea of the perfect teacher. However, teaching the gifted for twenty years has given me an insider's look at the qualities that distinguish the successful from the less-than-successful teacher of the gifted. This list is informally based on observations of outstanding teachers of the gifted and feedback from my gifted students. Since this column is designed to mentor new teachers of the gifted, the traits listed are ones that can be developed over time.

1. **Proceed with passion.** You love teaching, your subject(s), your students. Show your love and excitement. Find interesting approaches and projects that make the journey an adventure. Take workshops, read, and explore. Develop a repertoire of instructional strategies that fits your style and goals. Variety adds spice to your classroom, but variety means integration of strategies and activities into a meaningful whole with mastery of desired concepts and skills. Be the lifelong learner you want your students to be. Professional development in gifted education is a must. It will feed your passion and develop your creativity. Teachers of the gifted are under intense scrutiny. Your gifted students know when you are only going through the motions. If you want to inspire passion, you must be passionate.
2. **Know your subject.** Know what you want your students to know. It is not enough to read the student texts and teachers' manuals ahead of time. You must know your course material, what came before, and what comes after. Do outside research. You don't have to know everything, but you need to know enough to understand your students' questions and to be a resource. It's also your job to stimulate and challenge your students—difficult to do if you haven't mastered the subject. Gifted students can be very critical. They know when you aren't prepared. It's not necessary to be brilliant to teach the brilliant, but you must be knowledgeable and able to connect the pieces.

3. **Develop your sense of humor.** Teaching and learning may be 90% work and 10% fun, but the percentages will appear reversed with regular injections of humor. Laughter can lighten pressure and enable students to take more risks. It can also release your frustration and help you develop realistic expectations. Gifted students are quick to see absurdities. Encourage them to express their humor freely and help them to distinguish between laughing at someone and laughing with someone. Model self-acceptance, and be ready to laugh at your own mistakes and idiosyncrasies. Share some of your own childhood gaffes to show you are still in touch with the child within.
4. **Respect your students.** Don't talk down to your students. There's no reason to say "take away" when "subtract" is the correct term. No one likes to be patronized—not even first graders! When teaching writing skills to sixth graders, use thesis, precise, concise, and elaborate from day one. Using standard terminology from the beginning will save you time and ease communication.

   Don't treat gifted students with awe. "You're so smart. I love teaching you." Generic compliments like these suggest that you only like smart kids. Too much fawning may also make your gifted students feel like freaks, geeks, or falsely entitled. Praise them for a well-written essay, a fresh point of view, or an unusual solution to a problem. Your opinion will carry more weight if you give meaningful praise.
5. **Be open and flexible.** Have a yearlong plan based on what you want students to know by the end of the year and how you expect them to get there. You set the goals, but the paths to the goals should be open and flexible, dependent on individual student needs, interests, and learning styles. Each class is different and has different strengths and weaknesses. Reading material, assignments, and projects should be geared to maximize learning for your particular group of students. If you have a quiet, reserved group, you may create more opportunities for oral interaction and presentation. If your group has limited opportunities to see the world, add more field trips.

   Schedule enough time for discussions that may go off track. Gifted students are commonly good readers and proficient in using the Internet. They need a chance to bounce ideas off their classmates and practice in really listening to other ideas. Your classroom should fill voids in a gifted student's education. Distance learning and home teaching are efficient, but they can't provide the peer

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support, diversity, or stimulation of a well-designed classroom. Take advantage of student excitement and involvement. Diverge from your plans when necessary.

6. **Don't live in an ivory tower.** Stay involved, informed, and a part of the world. Pursue new interests. You'll be more interesting and effective if you can draw examples from life or the news to illustrate ideas. Model depth and breadth as a teacher and a person.

   Better rapport is possible if you have some understanding of your students' world—their music, heroes, style, TV shows, movies, latest trends, and jargon. Even if the current pop culture appears morally corrupt, try to see it through your students' eyes to find the attraction and redeeming values. Don't be totally out-of-touch or judgmental. Student-teacher communication is a two-way street. You may not be on the same page, but you should be in the same book. If you want to enlighten your students, be ready to be enlightened by them as well.

7. **Feel free to be uniquely you.** Gifted students run the gamut from conventional to cutting edge, painfully shy to gregarious. They may be athletes, computer nerds, bookworms, underachievers, artists, or pathfinders. We try to bring out the best in our students while accepting their individuality and weaknesses. Teachers of the gifted are equally diverse. Honoring your own uniqueness sets the stage for greater tolerance of individual differences and development of self-confidence in your students. Read your manuals, review the literature, observe peers, and go to workshops, but incorporate what you've learned into a revised plan that still reflects your own style. No one likes phonies, especially young people who are looking for their own spirit or identity. You'll give more to your students if you give yourself instead of a carbon copy of your imagined "ideal."

This is a partial list, a personal list, developed after years of teaching the gifted. I included traits that were most often cited by students as notable in their notes, essays, commentaries:

> I appreciate how you answer my questions no matter how unimportant or irrelevant they may seem. I admire you because you know so much about what you teach. I know some teachers who have tried to teach their subject but were off track or wrong. I also admire how you regard us with respect by treating us like people rather than children. I like how you teach us to have hope when dealing with the real world. *—Sixth grade boy, 1994*

> My teacher is exuberant, in other words, she is full of life. When she teaches, she teaches with enthusiasm, not like the other teachers at this school. She makes school fun. Her class is always full of giggles and chuckles. *—Sixth grade girl, 1999*

We may not be paragons, but we must try to move in that direction with professional development, feedback from peers and students, and a healthy work ethic. If we can change one life, inspire one student, we've made a difference. If we can change many lives and inspire thousands, we are teachers.

> My former English teacher changed my life. Her inspiration has made a lasting impression on me. Flavia once wrote, "Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Some people move our souls to dance. They awaken us to new understanding with the passing whisper of their wisdom. Some people make the sky more beautiful to gaze upon. They stay in our lives for awhile, leave footprints in our hearts, and we are never, ever the same."
>
> *—Eighth grade girl, 2000*

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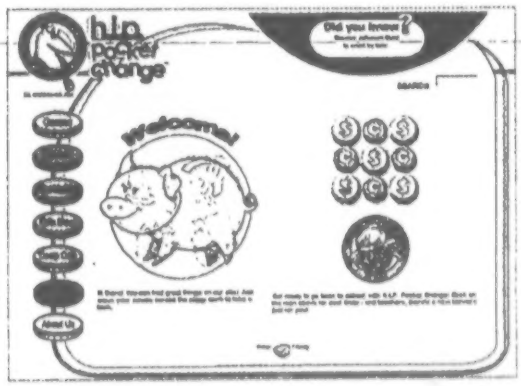
Social Studies for Educators

BY CAROLYN KOTTMEYER

The Internet is full of curriculum units, some providing only the information to teach a subject, others providing everything from soup to nuts, with pre-tests, quizzes, and tests, and all the materials in between! We often think of the Internet mostly for math and science, but there's plenty for social studies there, too.

Schoolhouse, home of the Encarta Lesson Collection contains detailed social studies curriculum units for grades K–12, on subjects from anthropology and civics to U.S. and world history, and much more in between. You can find a unit for elementary students on Abraham Lincoln, or Harriet Tubman; or a unit for secondary students on propaganda and public opinion in politics and advertising; or the early struggle of women to gain the right to vote in women's history.



The United States Mint site Pocket Change traces American history through coins. The colorful, appealing site has contests, games, cartoons, activities, and tips on coin collecting. A section for teachers provides information and lesson plans.

U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) Learning Web includes units for K–12 on subjects from exploring caves and global change, to land and people, and map adventures. Teachers' guides for all units are included, along with reproducibles, a glossary, a bibliography and more.

Anatomy of a Murder: A Trip Through Our Nation's Legal Justice System is a winning site written by children for the ThinkQuest website design contest, and it does just that; it follows the story of a defendant in a murder trial, along with sidebars and controversial issues. This is the real thing.

For more ThinkQuest sites, visit the **ThinkQuest Library** and find websites on history and government, people and places, philosophy, religion and mythology, society, and culture, and more!

Choices and Consequences consists of resource units, each containing a case study based on actual trials involving teenage perpetrators and victims. Case studies include "Teen Pranks," "Daring Your Friends," "Fighting," and "Stop Sign Case." In each, students view a videotape created by Court TV describing the facts of the case, including actual trial footage and interviews with principal participants and their families. Students then discuss the critical elements of each case, engage in role-playing exercises, and write about the implications of the case.

For additional sites, check out Hoagies' Page of Internet Investigations.

Kids' Korner

Social Studies sites and topics for our children abound on the Internet. Here are some of my favorites.

Ben's Guide to U.S. Government for Kids includes sections for every age group, from grades K–2, through 9–12 as well as parents and teachers. You can learn about state and national governments and their respective responsibilities, or how laws are made, or historical documents, at a variety of age levels. There are games and activities, and for parents and teachers, there is information on using Ben's as a learning tool with curriculum links, and more.

Encyclopedia Smithsonian, like it's real life namesake contains a little bit of everything. From the history and culture of Africa where you can make a virtual visit to the National Museum of African Art, to an American history timeline, to world cultures, World War I and II, you can find them all and with many topics in between. This is a site to wander around for hours!

h.i.p. Pocket Change traces American history through our coins. It includes games, cartoons, and even an on-line "camp." This site will intrigue any child interested in coins or American history.

Seven Wonders of the Ancient World—can you name all seven? One? Two? This site details the sites in words and photographs, and provides lists of forgotten, modern, and natural wonders, and links to more information about each of them! How many have you visited? Visit them all, virtually!

For even more social studies related sites, check out Hoagies' Kids and Teens Page of links. ■

CAROLYN KOTTMEYER is the webmistress of Hoagies' Gifted Education Page www.hoagiesgifted.org and Hoagies' Kids and Teens Page www.hoagieskids.org. She serves on the SENG Board of Directors (Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted), and writes occasionally for the Hollingworth Center's *Highly Gifted Children* and for *Our Gifted Children*.

WEBSITES

Schoolhouse Encarta Collection
www.encarta.msn.com/schoolhouse

U.S. Geological Survey
www.usgs.gov/education

Anatomy of a Murder
library.thinkquest.org/2760

Think Quest Library
www.thinkquest.org/library/search.html

Hoagies Internet Investigations
www.hoagiesgifted.org/investigations.htm

Ben's Guide to U.S. Government
bensguide.gpo.gov

Encyclopedia Smithsonian
www.si.edu/resource/faqh.i.p.

Pocket Change
www.usmint.gov/Kids

Seven Wonders of the World
ce.eng.usf.edu/pharos/wonders

Hoagies Kids and Teens Page
www.hoagieskids.org/kids.htm

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HyperStudio 4.0

BY PATRICIA ROBERTSON

HyperStudio 4.0 is a recent upgrade to a long-time favorite that further increases a student's ability to create imaginative and powerful presentations. The program is at once a simple authoring tool that can be used by very young presenters and a powerful tool for integrating many elements into a single presentation.

Creating a HyperStudio stack can be more than simply designing and linking a few cards. Students seem to be especially intrigued with fonts, colors, and clip art, and HyperStudio still provides a wealth of options that allow students free creative rein. A new Drag-and Drop capability speeds up the project development process. The program provides tools that allow students to include Internet resources in their projects. Buttons or graphic objects can be linked to websites. For example, clicking on a globe in HyperStudio can lead the student to a world history site. With this feature, users can easily organize websites for research or jump quickly to a selected site during a presentation. Clicking on a button or graphic object can play music, or streaming video.

Teachers can prompt students to create a record of their work by incorporating menu functions such as the Save Stack As... command. A new feature allows users to create a Stack-to-Go that can be shared with friends or family, or can be sent as an e-mail attachment. When opened by the recipient, the stack runs just as it did when it was created. This capability increases the option for collaborative learning among students in different areas. Classes could easily work on a collaborative project that brings together research on topics such as conservation, housing costs, or local history in different areas. The HyperStudio Player is another way to allow users to view a stack without actually having HyperStudio.

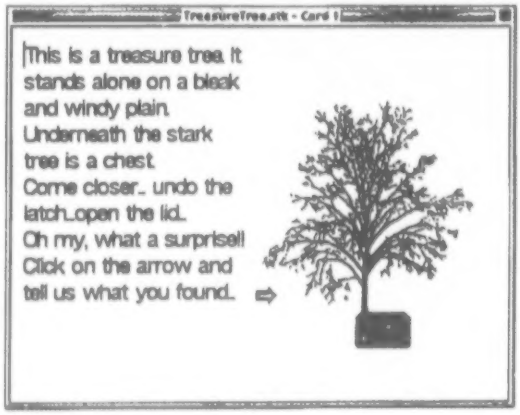
Although it's an easy matter to create a simple stack, it takes some time to explore all of the program's capabilities. Teachers might consider a cooperative learning activity that will build a cadre of student experts who can support each other and will ease the learning curve for students who join the class later in the year. Divide students into groups of two or three. Ask each group to create a project that demonstrates a particular feature of HyperStudio. Beginners can explore something as simple as ways to create or format cards. More advanced users can develop a stack to demonstrate how to use Internet resources or a stack that demonstrates Stack-to-Go.

With an increasing emphasis on performance-based assessment, an authoring and presentation tool that can be used by even very young children is a helpful addition to any classroom's software inventory. Using a HyperStudio project as an evaluation instrument provides both students and teachers with a concrete product that can be evaluated, discussed, and revised.

For teachers and students who want to preplan their presentations, HyperStudio provides several Symbol Libraries that can be used with Inspiration (reviewed in Spring 2001). Preplanning helps students learn organizational skills and may shorten the total project development time. If a program like Inspiration isn't available, creating a diagram that includes major project elements helps focus students on the critical elements of the finished product.

In March 2001, HyperStudio 4.0 won a prestigious CODIE Award from the Software Information Industry Association for the Best School-based Elementary Software. The program comes on a CD that includes both Windows and Macintosh versions and a substantial amount of additional material. Morph 2.5 which allows users to create morphing images to add to their presentations is also included.

HyperStudio is impressive for the amount of support materials offered to users. Ready-made lesson plans are included as are student projects and resources for extending the capabilities of the program. Although the program comes with only a User's Guide included, additional manuals are included on the HyperStudio CD. Many of the tutorials can be viewed on screen or printed using Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is included on the CD. Since some of the manuals are quite long, look carefully at Acrobat Reader print options. If possible, use the two-sided printing option that will save quite a lot of paper. Additional tutorials and feature specific documents are available on the HyperStudio website. New features are added frequently so it's worth checking back occasionally. ■


TreasureTree.stk - Card 1
This is a treasure tree. It stands alone on a bleak and windy plain. Underneath the stark tree is a chest. Come closer... undo the latch...open the lid. Oh my, what a surprise!! Click on the arrow and tell us what you found.

HyperStudio 4.0
Knowledge Adventure, Inc.
1-800-545-7677
www.hyperstudio.com

Suggested retail price: $199.95 (Teacher's Edition); $69.95 (Student's Edition)

System Requirements: Macintosh PPC 601 or better with 8 MB free RAM; Mac OS 8.1 or newer, 8.6 for Online Help; or Windows Pentium 100 with 32 MB RAM; Windows 95, 98, NT 4.0 or newer; 2000, and a Sound Blaster compatible Sound Card. Both versions require QuickTime 3.0 (QuickTime 4 full install preferred),a 4x CD-ROM drive, 256 colors or higher, an active TCP/IP connection for Internet-based features, and Internet Explorer 4.5 or Netscape Navigator 4.7 (Netscape 6 not supported).

PATRICIA ROBERTSON has been a classroom teacher, library media specialist, technology coordinator, and administrator. She has been involved with technology in education for nearly 20 years. She can be reached at jnrper@pacbell.net.

Creating Shared Family Memories

BY JODY FICKES SHAPIRO

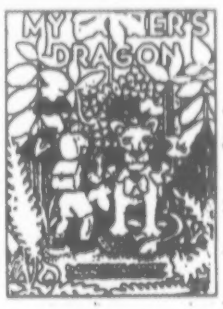
Most parents of gifted children understand their role in developing their children's literacy. Readers of *Gifted Education Communicator* probably read aloud almost daily to their preschool children from infancy. I speculate, however, when these children reach school age and read independently, parental reading aloud becomes less frequent, if continued at all. Many parents believe that once their children's literacy skills are established, it's unnecessary. If reading ability were the only benefit derived from reading aloud, they might be correct. But it is not.

Just as we parents assume the initial task of decoding words and language for our children, we continue to oversee the process of decoding the world of experience and the language of the "heart." But most often we become administrators, relinquishing an active role. We turn to the professional teaching community to assume the next step in our children's intellectual development—we enroll them in school. We sign them up for extracurricular sporting and arts experiences for additional enrichment and to develop their socialization skills. Many of us also commit our children to some formalized religious training in the hopes of awakening and expanding their moral lives. We drop them off at school, at the soccer field, and at Sunday School. And we stand on the sidelines, waiting to pick them up. It becomes increasingly difficult to find or give enough quality time for real and sustained family communication.

By continuing to read aloud daily, you can remain active in the development of your children's intellectual and spiritual lives. Select books that challenge and entertain, expand awareness of the world, generate thoughtful discussion, and whet the appetite to read more. Rediscover books that resonated with you if you were lucky enough to have had a parent or teacher who read to you. Talk to other parents, lobby the daily newspaper for more coverage of children's books, and ask your child's teachers for their list of favorites. Consult Jim Trelease's *The Read-Aloud Handbook*, your local children's librarian, and your independent children's bookseller who usually has the inside track on the best new publications and often provides a newsletter that highlights them.

Here are some of my own favorites for starters. Over the course of writing this column I will add more titles.

Gifted children as young as four or five should be started on chapter books. Stories like *Charlotte's Web*, the first of the Laura Ingalls Wilder "Little House" series, Joanna Hurwitz's "Russell" books, and Ruth Gannett's *My Father's Dragon* and its two sequels are great beginners. Also "must reads" are *Sarah Plain and Tall, Stone Fox, Stargone John*, and *Dragonling*. Chapter books offer



the opportunity to hear stories with more fully developed characters and themes. By reading a longer book over successive days, a sustained relationship to a book's slowly developing plot adds a deeper dimension to the experience.

Although my children and I didn't adore every Roald Dahl book with equal fervor, he certainly gave us many hours of entertainment—especially on cold and rainy days. I particularly recall one occasion when we had a range of ages to keep occupied, including a 16-year-old who considered himself too sophisticated to snuggle up for a story with six year olds. As I read aloud from *James and the Giant Peach* I heard him call out from the adjoining room. "Read that line again, I didn't hear it."

Kids learn about the hazards of farm life on the Canadian prairies from *Incident at Hawk's Hill*, how to cope with the death of a friend from Katherine Paterson's *Bridge to Terabithia*, and to be careful what to wish for in Bill Brittain's folksy *The Wishgiver*. When my own

kids thought I was the world's most difficult mother I read them Willo Robert's groundbreaking book, *Don't Hurt Laurie* and we had a serious look at the issues of child abuse. *About the B'nai Bagels* offered us an opportunity to explore honesty and good sportsmanship, and *Ida Early Comes Over the Mountain* exposed them to living in the South during the Great Depression and, even more importantly, what it means to be a good friend.

Together our family escaped into Lloyd Alexander's thrilling and dangerous landscapes in *The Book of Three* and its sequels. *Taran Wanderer*, the fourth of the series, offers early teen readers a thoughtful look at the complicated journey of self-discovery. I have to confess that not all series held us as firmly. We couldn't make it past the third book of C. S. Lewis's "Chronicles of Narnia" although we tried valiantly. In earlier years

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the details of Laura's wedding dress in *These Happy Golden Years* were skipped, but that was only when we re-read the entire series for the second time. If my children were still teenagers, we would savor the swashbuckling, twisting, and turning prose of charismatic Brian Jacques's "The Redwall Series." And I could never have convinced them at seven or eight that they were too young to hear "Harry Potter." The only book they asked me to stop reading because it was too scary was *A Wrinkle in Time*. They were in fifth and sixth grades, and waited to read it on their own when they got to middle school.

Because I wanted my kids to understand the necessity of the civil rights movement I read them *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, and we wept over *Sounder*. In this past decade I would have broadened my own education as well as theirs while reading aloud the Walter Dean Myers biography of Malcolm X. And we would have stayed up way past bedtime to finish Christopher Paul Curtis' *The Watsons Go to Birmingham, 1963*. (There were a couple of times when I broke the unwritten promise that I wouldn't read ahead. Somehow they could always tell.) There are few books as successful in sending the reader on an emotional roller coaster as this story of a family journey from Flint, Michigan to Birmingham, Alabama during the ugly and tragic events of the early '60s. Before "The Watsons" they would already have heard A.A. Milne's classic *Winnie the Pooh* so that Curtis's deliciously wicked humor could be fully appreciated. Curtis' second novel, Newbery Medal winning *Bud, Not Buddy*, set in the Depression Era in Michigan, gives a sense of the African-American experience during that period of labor unrest and economic hardship.

We entered the darkest period of the twentieth century together through such stories as *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit* and *Island on Bird Street*. Jane Yolen's *Devil's Arithmetic*, joined more recently by Sonia Levitin's *The Cure*, which brilliantly dramatizes the insidious outbreaks of anti-Semitism of the Middle Ages, are important additions to the body of literature that helps children understand the inevitable and tragic outcomes of racial discrimination and religious persecution.

Lois Lowry's Newbery Medal winner, *Number the Stars*, with its focus on the brave Danish Resistance to the Nazis, is a good introduction to this genre for 9- or 10-year-olds. Mature listeners will applaud the daring of Polish heroine Irene Gut Opdyke, who saved Jewish lives while serving as a housekeeper to a Nazi military officer. Her autobiography, *In My Hands*, stands as an inspiring testament to the power of a single righteous human being. Naomi Shahib Nye provides a thoughtful complement to books on the Holocaust in her novel, *Habibi*, which explores the uneasy co-existence of the Palestinian Arabs and the Israelis.

Before our sons began high school I selected young adult books relevant to issues they would encounter. It made it possible to open up discussion of serious topics in a comfortable way within a safe, non-judgmental family environment. The consequences of drinking and driving were poignantly exposed in Cynthia Voigt's *Izzy, Willy-Nilly;* we think it should be required eighth grade reading. *Whirligig* by Paul Fleischman expands the topic to include concepts of mediated conciliation and restitution.

We would have read *Speak* to open a discussion about responsible dating, but it was published only in the fall of 1999. Instead we read Judy Blume's novels when our kids reached puberty because she was among the first writers to broach the topic of sexual development for young readers. In the midst of *Are You There God, It's Me Margaret*, one of the boys offered me the opportunity to stop in case I was feeling uncomfortable reading to them about shopping for bras. I assured him that I was only unhappy with Blume's writing style, and confessed that as I read, I edited the bad grammar but not the story. I told them that some day they would marry and they should know the kinds of things girls needed to deal with.

Russell Hoban's classic fantasy, *The Mouse and His Child*, has been reprinted to be cherished by a new generation of families. It's brilliant metaphor works both as a read-aloud adventure and a thoughtful philosophical exploration wherein a wind-up toy mouse father and son set out hand-in-hand on a perilous life adventure to discover how to become self-winding. When I read it to my sons at ages eight and nine, I was amazed at

how intuitively they grasped the depth of Hoban's story. The younger one (who, incidentally, is now passing his love of reading on to his own classroom of third graders) happened to be taking a ceramics class at the time. Twenty-three years later, I still have his sculpture that captured the tenderness of *The Mouse and His Child*.

The hours our family spent reading aloud helped our kids decode their world, find the words and opportunities to articulate ideas, and examine choices and possibilities. The beauty of a book is that as a reader you are in control. You can start and stop, read and reread. Day after day, the words remain on the pages, waiting for reader and listener to bring them to life. They are waiting to enrich our lives. They are waiting to create shared family memories. ■

JODY FICKES SHAPIRO is a children's literature consultant and owner of Adventures for Kids bookstore in Ventura, CA. She can be reached at jodyshapiro@bigpond.com.

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READ-ALOUD BOOKS

(In the case of series, only one of the titles has been listed.)

The Book of Three
Lloyd Alexander
1999, Holt, $18.95, $5.99
0-8050-6132-0, 0-440-40702-8 paper

Speak
Laurie Halse Anderson
1999, Farrar, $16.00, $7.99
0-374-37152-0, 0-14-131088-X paper

Sounder
Wm. H. Armstrong
1969, Harpercollins, $15.95, $5.95
0-06-020143-6, 0-06-440020-4 paper

Are You There God, It's Me Margaret
Judy Blume
1991, Laurel Leaf, $5.50
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The Wishgiver
Bill Britten
1990, Harpercollins, $5.95
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Ida Early Comes Over the Mountain
Robert D. Burch
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Bud, Not Buddy
Christopher Paul Curtis
1999, Delacorte, $16.95
0-385-32306-9

Watsons Go to Birmingham, 1963
Christopher Paul Curtis
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0-385-32175-9, 0-440-41412-1 paper

James and the Giant Peach
Roald Dahl
2001, Puffin, $5.99
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Allen Eckert
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Paul Fleischman
1998, Holt, $16.95, $4.99
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Three Tales of My Father's Dragon
Ruth Stiles Gannett
1997, Random, $16.95, $5.99
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Stone Fox
John Gardiner
1987, Crowell, $15.89, $4.95
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The Mouse and His Child
Russell Hoban
2001, Arthur Levine, $16.95
0-439-39826-2

Rip-Roaring Russell
Joanna Hurwitz
2001, Harpercollins, $4.25
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Redwall
Brian Jacques
1987, Putnam, $22.99, $6.99
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Judith Kerr
1997, Paperstar, $5.99
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E.L. Konigsburg
1985, Yearling, $4.50
0-440-40034-1 paper

A Wrinkle in Time
Madeleine L'Engle
1973, Farrar, $17.00, $6.50
0-374-38613-7, 0-0440-49805-8 paper

The Cure
Sonia Levitin
1999, Silverwhistle, $16.00, 4.95
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Chronicles of Narnia (Boxed set-7 Volumes)
C.S. Lewis
1994, Harpercollins, $34.65
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C.S. Lewis
1994, Harpercollins, $16.95, $7.95
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1989, Houghton, $16.00, $5.99
0-395-57106-0, 0-440-22753-4 paper

Sarah, Plain and Tall
Patricia Maclachlan
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Stargone John
Ellen Kindt McKenzie
1992, Holt, $6.95
0-8050-2069-1 paper

Malcolm X; By Any Means Necessary
Walter Dean Myers
1999, Polaris, $5.99
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Habibi
Naomi Shihab Nye
1999, Simon&Schuster, $16.00, $4.99
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In My Hands
Irene Gut Opdyke
2000, Knopf, $18.00, $12.00
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Island on Bird Street
Uri Orlev
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Katherine Paterson
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Don't Hurt Laurie
Willo Davis Roberts
1988, Aladdin, $4.99
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J.K. Rowling
1999, Arthur Levine, $19.95, $6.99
0-590-35340-3, 0-590-35340-3 paper

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry
Mildred Taylor
2001, Phyllis Fogelman, $17.99,
0-8037-2647-3, 0-14-038451-0 paper

The Read-Aloud Handbook (5th ed.)
Jim Trelease
2001, Penguin, $22.55, $15.00
0-808503243, 0-14-100161-5 paper

Izzy, Willy-Nilly
Cynthia Voigt
1986, Atheneum, $18.00, $5.50
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Charlotte's Web
E. B. White
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—Jody Fickes Shapiro

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Stand Up for Your Gifted Child: How to Make the Most of Kids' Strengths at School and at Home

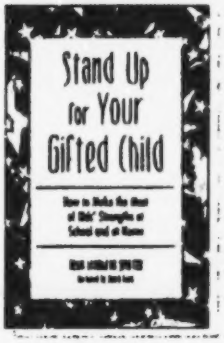
By Joan Franklin Smutny

(2001) Free Spirit Publishing
paperback, $14.95, 190 pp.
ISBN: 1-57542-088-0

REVIEWED BY SHARON FREITAS

Sitting down to briefly thumb through this new, interesting looking book was a mistake! Thinking only to read a few pages, pick out a few resources, and then put the book on the shelf for further reference didn't happen. Once involved, this book grabs the reader for a joyous ride, beginning first where many parents begin, trying to understand what giftedness is!

Joan Smutny is a familiar name, both as an author and as a nationally known presenter. This parent focused book is written in the same style as she speaks—very direct and personal. It makes you feel as though you have found a friend and an advocate who will be at your fingertips to help you when you are struggling to understand and when you are helping others to understand your gifted child.



One of the innovative features of this book is the use of shaded boxes that stand out. At the beginning of each chapter these short paragraphs are the voices of gifted students and parents who have been there, describing many of the same experiences that the reader may have had. Later, a magnifying glass is added to the shaded box to indicate resources that can be used to "Find Out More."

An example from Chapter 3 entitled "Helping Your Child Cope with Friendships, Family, and Feelings," refers the reader to Find Out More about the use of biographies to provide powerful role models for gifted children. The two references include contact information for the National Women's History Project and a search engine for kids designed by librarians called KidsClick! The author has recognized that parents and students are motivated by the use of technology and has included e-mail and website addresses whenever possible.

Parents are always urged to be advocates for gifted education. This book gives them tools to be advocates first for their own gifted child, and in doing do, they also become visible supporters of gifted education. The strategies provided are practical and can produce positive relationships between the home and school for the child as well as the parent. Teachers who need and want to find ways of motivating and challenging the gifted child in the classroom could also utilize many of the suggestions intended for parents. The classroom teacher who is also a parent of a gifted child could find this book especially helpful when coaching other teachers, particularly those new to the classroom.

The final page of each chapter is a short recap of ways parents can "Take A Stand," illustrated as a signboard on a stick. Instead of summarizing the points made in the chapter, the author provides a list of questions to reflect on and some activities to initiate. How can a parent fail to become an advocate or begin to be proactive with such a roadmap! Kudos to Joan Franklin Smutny. ■

SHARON FREITAS is the secretary for the California Association for the Gifted, and previously served four years as chair of the parent representatives. She lives in Sacramento, CA.

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Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms

By Diane Ravitch, PhD

(2000) Simon & Schuster
hardcover, $30.00, 555 pp.
ISBN: 0-684-84417-6

REVIEWED BY ELAINE WIENER

If there is a lesson to be learned from the river of ink that was spilled in the education disputes of the twentieth century, it is that anything in education that is labeled 'a movement' should be avoided like the plague."

So starts the first paragraph of the conclusion to Diane Ravitch's book, *Left Back*. If you've wondered how we managed to land where we are in education, as have I, this is the ultimate book to answer that question. In many ways, it is an example of "Watch out what you ask for; you may get it."

The evolution of modern day education, in my opinion, was a painfully foolish voyage. Ravitch soothes my hindsight-malaise with "We cannot understand where we are and where we are heading without knowing where we have been." *Left Back* certainly does that!

Her objective in writing this history is to "trace the origins of America's seemingly permanent debate about school standards, curricula, and methods." To do this, she tells a story about educators and intellectual arguments which dichotomized progressive and traditional education into battlegrounds.

This is a very long book because it is a very long story. Ravitch tells us that "each generation supposes that its complaints are unprecedented and...those who seek the 'good old days' will be disappointed, for in fact there never was a Golden Age." And she goes on to tell us the whole story in such an engaging style that the entire history is captivating. The details are repetitive, at times, because so many different people

and methods contributed to the larger events. This repetition is necessary to one's awareness of how some unbelievable circumstances evolved.

Ravitch is a very precise researcher who describes many educators on many fronts to highlight both sides of this battleground. In the process, there were names new to me who were unsung heroes. They were unheeded as they saw the handwriting on the wall, predicting the events of today's educational problems.

Diane Ravitch is known as a conservative educator. This can often be seen in the generalizations she makes after presenting information which is factual and backed up with extensive notes per chapter and a selected bibliography.

Often her generalizations are blended into the factual part of her text and are "cut and dried" so that the reader has to be alert to separate fact from opinion. She is a clear thinker who sweeps out the superfluous. Therefore, at times, important nuances are ignored. Philosophies of education have causes and reasons which can soften harsh judgments. I share her views in most matters; nevertheless, I would have preferred a cleaner delineation.

One example is Ravitch's personal opinion regarding constructivist educators. She writes, "It became axiomatic among constructivists that 'knowledge is not transmitted directly from one knower to another, but is actively built up by the learner.' This meant that teachers must never lecture or 'tell,' that any memorization was intolerable, that instruction was a discredited form of behaviorism, and that up-to-date teachers viewed themselves as 'facilitators' of learning."

And just as the reader wants to engage Ravitch in debate over such a one-sided conclusion, there appear other conclusions that describe teachers as thinkers who pull in new information, balance it with old tried and true teaching, and prevail.

Generally speaking, she is fair in presenting various points of view, and her moderation shines in this statement:
"At their extremes, [progressive and traditional education] both sides can be faulted, the one for demeaning intellectual and academic standards, the other for caring more about subject matter than children. But at their best, both philosophies have made valuable and complementary contributions to American education."

This is a beautifully written book and should be a standard in one's library. Diane Ravitch is a prolific writer and currently holds the Brown Chair in Education Studies at the Brookings Institution and edits *Brookings Papers on Education Policy.* ■

ELAINE WIENER is Associate Editor for Book Reviews for *Gifted Education Communicator*. She teaches a self-contained class for gifted students at Allen Elementary School in Garden Grove, CA. She can be reached at eew.ca@worldnet.att.net.

How to Use Problem-Based Learning In the Classroom

By Robert Delisle

(1997) Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)
paperback, $12.95, 106 pp.
ISBN: 0-87120-291-3

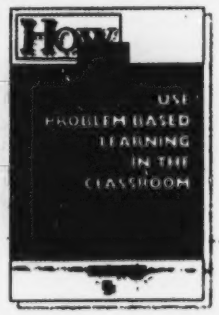
REVIEWED BY MELISSA EWART

One of our greatest desires as educators is to enable our students to think critically and apply their knowledge to real-life situations. Problem-based learning is a strategy that encourages students to move beyond rote memorization and regurgitation of material to the acquisition and retention of new knowledge and skills learned by solving problems that are relevant to students' lives. In Delisle's "how-to" manual, he clearly and successfully defines Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and explains why it is important to implement this strategy in the classroom.

In the first chapter, Delisle makes a strong case as to why the strategy of solving problems creates a connection between the students' lives and their learning; why it cultivates active engagement from all students; how it promotes interdisciplinary learning; how it allows students to have choice in how and what they learn; and how it encourages them to work collaboratively on the common goal of solving a problem.

Delisle then carefully guides teachers through the steps needed to make this strategy work in the classroom. He stresses the importance of a well-written problem and expounds on the necessary elements a problem statement should have, placing emphasis on the fact that all statements should have content and skill objectives, be curriculum-based, and grounded in student experience.

After this problem statement has been established, Delisle then leads the teacher through a detailed description of the PBL process, constantly giving helpful examples from all disciplines. Evaluation of this learning process, for both the teacher and the student, is an essential element of the success of this strategy, and as a result, Delisle offers several evaluation questions and formats from which teachers can pick and choose. In fact, it is the templates for checklists, lessons, evaluations, and rating forms that make this book teacher-friendly.



The second half of this meaty, 100-page manual is devoted to case study lessons from various disciplines and grade levels. Each lesson takes the reader through the whole PBL process as it is played out in the classroom. At the end of each lesson there is a helpful section called "Implications for Other Teachers" in which Delisle gives suggestions of possible adaptations of the lesson to other disciplines or units of study.

Delisle does such a commendable job explaining the PBL process and providing examples, that by the end of the book, readers are confident that Problem-Based Learning is possible to immediately implement within their classrooms. ■

MELISSA EWART teaches a GATE core program of language arts and history at LaColina Junior High School in Santa Barbara, CA. She also taught a demonstration class in CAG's 2001 Summer Institute.

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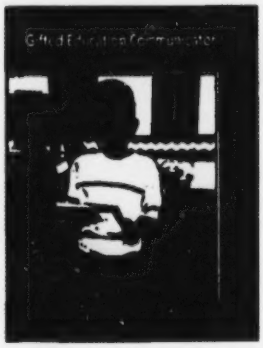

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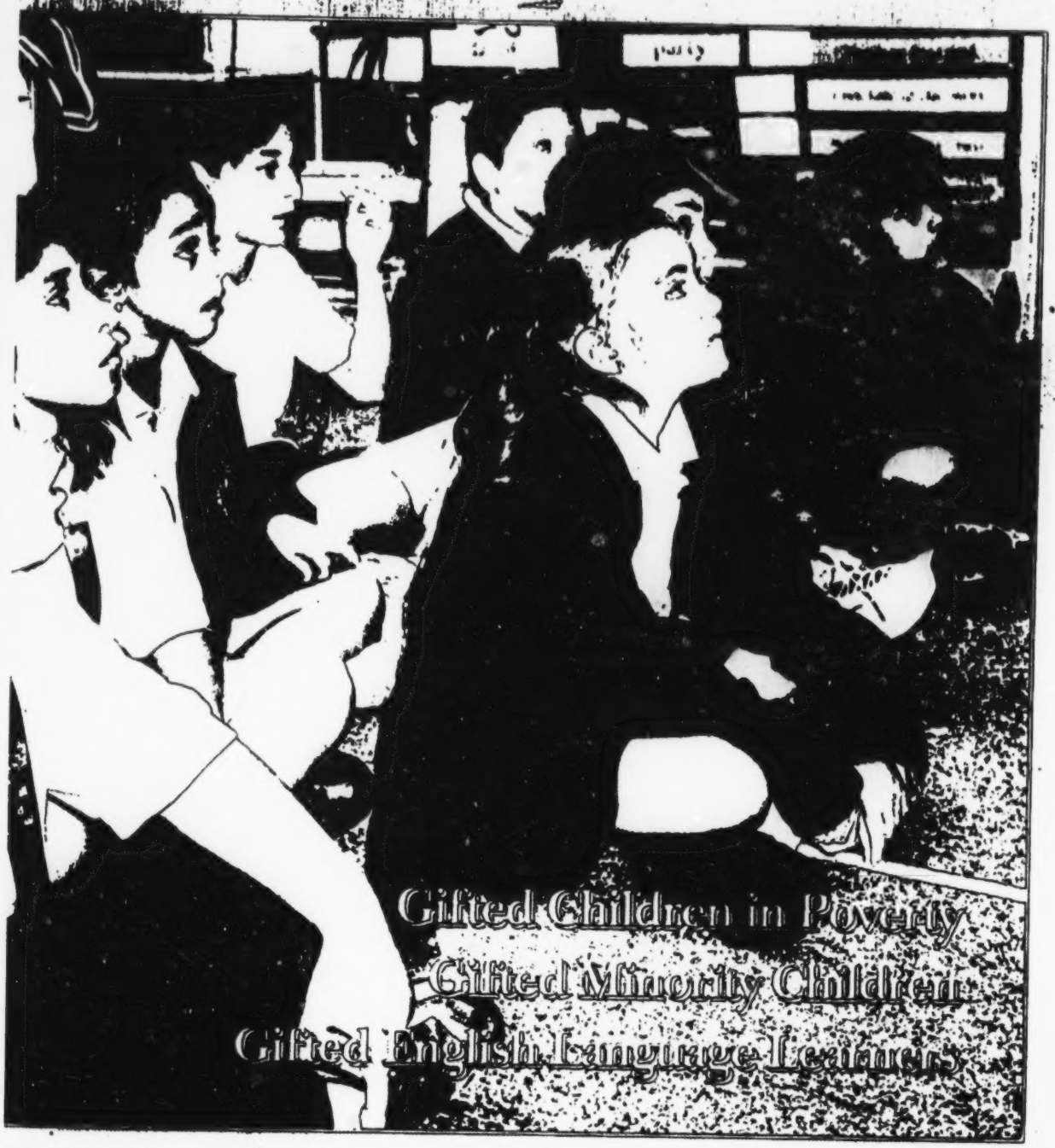

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A Journal for Educators and Parents

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Roles & Responsibilities

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Fall (September 2002) - Language Arts

Cover:
Students ponder a question posed in Irene Guzmán's class at Heninger School in Santa Ana.
Photo by Geneva Wayne

DEC 2001

CALENDAR OF CONFERENCES

DECEMBER 5–8, 2001
Texas Association for Gifted and Talented
Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, TX
512-499-8248, www.txgifted.org

FEBRUARY 3–5, 2002
Illinois Association for Gifted Children
Chicago Marriott Downtown, Chicago, IL
847-963-1892, www.iagcgifted.org

FEBRUARY 6–7, 2002
Arizona Association for Gifted and Talented
Sodexho Conference Center, Phoenix, AZ
602-482-8415, www.azagt.org

FEBRUARY 6–8, 2002
Arkansas Gifted and Talented Education
Austin Hotel-Convention Center, Hot Springs, AR
http://agate.k12.ar.us/Srs.htm

FEBRUARY 20–22, 2002
Kentucky Association for Gifted Education
Marriott's Griffin Gate Resort, Lexington, KY
270-745-4301, www.wku.edu/kage

FEBRUARY 21–22, 2002
Nebraska Association for the Gifted
DoubleTree Hotel, Omaha, NE
402-561-6000, www.nebraskagifted.org

FEBRUARY 28, MARCH 1–2, 2002
Georgia Association for Gifted Children
Georgia Center for Continuing Education
University of Georgia, Athens, GA
www.gagc.org/page3.html

FEBRUARY 28, MARCH 1–2, 2002
Indiana Association for the Gifted
317-705-1660, www.iag-online.org/confpg.htm

FEBRUARY 28–MARCH 1, 2002
Oklahoma Association of Gifted, Creative, & Talented
University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, OK
405-521-4287, http://title3.sde.state.ok.us/gifted/OAGCT.htm

MARCH 1–2, 2002
New Jersey Association for Gifted Children
Princeton Marriott Forrestal Village, Princeton, NJ
609-586-6133, www.njagc.org

MARCH 1–3, 2002
California Association for the Gifted
Wyndham Hotel & Convention Center, Palm Springs, CA
562-789-9933, www.CAGifted.org

MARCH 14–16, 2002
North Carolina Association for Gifted and Talented/PAGE
The Adam's Mark Hotel, Winston-Salem, NC
910-326-8463, www.ncagt.org/index.shtml

APRIL 4–6, 2002
Montana Association of Gifted and Talented Education
Great Falls, MT
lamar@digisys.net

APRIL 25–27, 2002
Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education
Harrisburg Hilton & Towers, Harrisburg, PA
215-661-1680, www.penngifted.org/events/Conference2002

MAY 3–5, 2002
Beyond IQ: Highly & Profoundly Gifted
Wakefield (Boston), MA
www.geocities.com/giftedconferenceplanners/index.html

JUNE 28–30, 2002
Beyond IQ: Highly & Profoundly Gifted
Four Points O'Hare, Chicago, IL
www.geocities.com/giftedconferenceplanners/index.html

JULY 12–14
SENG (Supporting Emotional Needs of Gifted)
Doubletree-Minnapolis Park Place, Minneapolis, MN
206-498-6744, www.sengifted.org

OCTOBER 10–12, 2002
Advocacy for Gifted and Talented Education in New York
Atheneaum Hotel Chautauqua, NY
716-326-4478, www.agateny.org

OCTOBER 13–15, 2002
Gifted Association of Missouri (GAM)
Tan-Tar-A Resort, Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri, USA
www.mogam.org/www/conference.shtml

OCTOBER 18–19, 2002
New England Conference on Gifted and Talented Education
Marriott Hotel, Quincy, MA
www.necgt.org

OCTOBER 30–NOVEMBER 3, 2002
National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)
Adam's Mark Hotel, Denver, CO
202-785-4268, www.nagc.org

If your organization has a state or national event planned, please contact Margaret Gosfield at ***gosfield@home.com*** *to list your information.*

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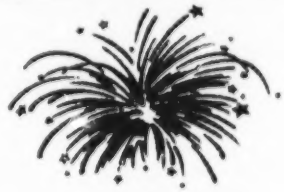

CONFERENCE 2002

March 1–3, 2002

Palm Springs Wyndham Hotel
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People have long viewed equity and excellence as antithetical forces. The belief was that you could have one or the other, but not both. That view is no longer tenable. As the demographics of our nation continue to change, as the children in our schools come increasingly from varying backgrounds and cultures, and the world becomes ever more interdependent, we cannot afford to leave some children behind because they are children from poverty, speak a different language, or share a different culture. The challenges of the twenty-first century require that we develop the gifts and talents of all children no matter what their backgrounds. The authors in this issue bear testimony to what can be accomplished given the determination, intelligence, and passion of educators and parents willing to collaborate with one another.

The lead article by Paul Slocumb addresses the issue of gifted children from poverty. Slocumb presents his thesis that poverty is the condition that crosses all racial and cultural groups and which presents the greatest challenge in programs for gifted children. His article as well as the book he coauthored (see review on page 58), provides a thoughtful, theoretical framework for discussion of the issue of poverty and gifted children.

During our many e-mail exchanges, Paul put me in contact with two individuals willing to share remarkable illustrations of the factors of poverty which require a different mindset when adults seek to make a difference in the lives of children. Philip Franshaw was born into inner-city poverty. His story of growing up and overcoming obstacles provide inspiration for all. The resiliency he developed through the firm guidance of his mother and the support of two athletic coaches provides examples of how great a difference an adult can make in the life of a child. Phillip ends his story with the admonition to adults to mentor a child and change the world.

Diana Freudensprung completes the trio of articles with a narration of her experience at a summer institute directed by C. June Maker held at the University of Tucson in Arizona. The desert environment of Tucson where Freudensprung was a stranger was a great contrast to the Gulf Coast region of Texas where she lived and worked as an assistant principal in a large urban middle school. Her reflections about what a child coming from another culture and perhaps speaking a different language must feel upon entering school in America should give pause for all educators.

And what was that institute all about? June Maker and Robert Lane share information about the DISCOVER (Discovering Intellectual Strengths and Capabilities while Observing varied Ethnic Responses) Project and particularly their work in identifying and serving Native American children.

Through her research Maker determined that the most important component in success was "superior ability to solve complex problems." And she concluded that, "A fascinating two-way relationship appeared—the level of any given intelligence possessed by an individual can be assessed by observing problem-solving skills and conversely, problem-solving skills and over all learning capacity can be improved by learning 'through' or 'by applying' one's strongest intelligences." She illustrates how the strategies are now used in both assessment and curriculum programs and their impact when used in various cultures and languages.

Elinor Ruth Smith reminds us that we have been talking about the issue of equity and excellence for decades. She provides a cogent description of the causes of underserved children in our schools and follows this with succinct "Do's" and "Don'ts" for ameliorating the situation. And she challenges us to think deeply about whether or not we have the will and the determination to carry them out—for if not, we can expect to be discussing these problems again a decade from now.

Gifted children who speak a language other than English offer another challenge to educators and parents. Ernesto Bernal shares his thoughts regarding recruiting and retaining gifted bilingual teachers, thereby addressing a crucial component in that challenge. We are grateful to Allyn & Bacon for permitting us to reprint Bernal's chapter from the new book, *Reaching New Horizons: Gifted and Talented Education for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*. We invite you to find additional related topics especially those regarding the identification and service to these children in this book edited by Eva Díaz and Jaime Castellano (see review on page 58).

Parents are another critical component. Immigrant parents are typically unfamiliar with the American public school system and not able to readily assist their school-age children in succeeding within the system. Sandi Ortiz Ishii, herself the daughter of immigrant parents, shares her experiences and provides guidelines for Spanish-speaking parents of the children she teaches in Garden Grove, California. Her district calls on her often to give parent workshops in Spanish. For us she provides the English translation as well! We invite you to have her recommendations translated into whatever language your parents need. Because of space limitations, we could not include all of her materials in print. But you may go to the CAG website at www.cagifted.org/gec.htm and download additional parent workshop materials. In particular, see her guides for introducing parents to higher education and suggestions for preparing children for college.

Finally, Marjorie Fox describes a special program which supports highly gifted, low-income students in San Diego. Collaboration between the Human Development Foundation and the San Diego City Schools along with additional private and public agencies, provides an action plan for people who really want to get things done. Similar collaborative efforts should be encouraged throughout the country.

This issue of *Gifted Education Communicator* is full of promise—a promise both to and from. There is a promise to the children, who through no fault of their own have been denied the recognition and the service they deserve, that it shall be forthcoming. There is also a promise from educators and parents that we will not rest until it has been accomplished.

—MARGARET GOSFIELD, Editor

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Can Standardized Tests Measure Gifted Thinking?

BY CATHERINE BARKETT

This is the second of two articles about assessment. In the last issue we discussed standardized tests in general and presented a national snapshot of their use in the United States. In this article we address three questions.

Question: Can standardized tests measure creativity or higher-order thinking skills?

Standardized tests are often faulted by people who say that such tests only measure rote learning and basic skills, as opposed to talents such as creativity and the use of higher order thinking skills. Is this a fair criticism? Remember that a standardized test is one that is administered under standard conditions to all participants. In other words, all test-takers have the same instructions, the same amount of time, and the same scoring. Standardizing the conditions under which a test is taken does not relegate the test automatically to a category of basic skills, or rote recall testing. An obvious example of a test that measures creativity is a writing prompt that is scored according to a rubric that rewards students for creative techniques such as humor, persuasive ability, or original thinking. When administered under standard conditions and scored fairly, these tests are considered "standardized."

Even multiple-choice tests, which are often maligned, can assess higher order thinking skills if the questions are designed properly. Take for example the following questions from the promotional material the California State Department of Education offers regarding its High School Exit Exam. In the first, the student has read an essay describing how the different functions of the two halves of the brain might influence personality and behavior. Then the student is given four sentences from the essay and is asked: "Which of these sentences does NOT fit well in the paragraph in which it is found?" Consider that the student must 1) figure out the main idea of each paragraph, 2) identify supporting details in each paragraph, and 3) decide which sentence does not fit within this structure. Hardly a rote task! Instead students are asked to apply what they know about good writing, as if they were editors.

In another prompt, students read a passage about White Fang, and are asked:

Which of these sentences from the story BEST illustrates the wild side of White Fang's nature?

A. He knew an overpowering desire for the protection and companionship of man.
B. Upon his inward sight was impressed a succession of memory-pictures.
C. Here in the running stream where ice was beginning to form, he hid his trail.
D. Then, and quite suddenly, he became aware of loneliness.

Asking students to choose the best alternative involves comparison and evaluation of each of the choices.

Well-designed questions are not easy or inexpensive to develop, but they illustrate the possibilities, even in a highly structured format like multiple choice, for assessing students' advanced abilities.

Many other standardized tests measure higher order thinking skills. For more examples, the reader is referred to Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Exams as well as the LSAT and MCAT.

Question: Is there evidence that taking standardized tests improves student learning?

When student learning improves, it is usually difficult to determine why. Students don't learn in a vacuum; there are usually many different factors influencing achievement. But there are some correlations that suggest a positive relationship between standardized testing and improved student learning. Data from TIMSS (the Third International Mathematics and Science Study) show that students from countries that have curriculum-based examinations are significantly higher in achievement than students from other countries, even when matched for comparable levels of economic development. Where state exams were instituted early in the United States—Connecticut, Kentucky, North Carolina and Texas—they show the greatest increases in reading and mathematics on the NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress). It appears that well-designed tests help focus students and teachers on the most important aspects of a curriculum.

Question: What reliable information can we get from standardized tests, and how should this information be used?

Educators misuse test results when they apply the results to purposes for which these tests were not intended. Numerous examples are available. Tests that were designed by states to give summary information about the general achievement levels of students might be used to evaluate teacher performance, or make decisions about placements for individual students, even though the test was never designed for those purposes. Tests designed to measure student achievement might be used to identify gifted students even when no gifted students were included in the norming process, and the test was not designed for this purpose. In order for us to use test information reliably, we need to examine the purposes for which the tests were created, and the populations on which they were tested, or normed.

Assessment is a tool, and like any tool, it can be used well, or poorly. Parents and educators would be well advised to ask questions about the purposes of the tests, the way in which the tests were constructed, and the reliability and validity of the tests. Most important are the data we gain from assessment – what information can these data provide us and how can we best use the information? ■

CATHERINE BARKETT is California Curriculum Consultant for McDougal Littell, part of the Houghton Mifflin publishing company. She served previously as the GATE consultant in the California Department of Education.

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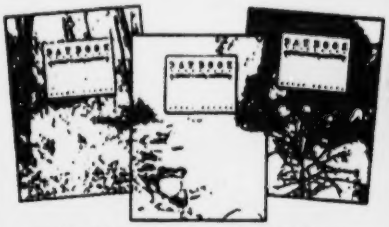

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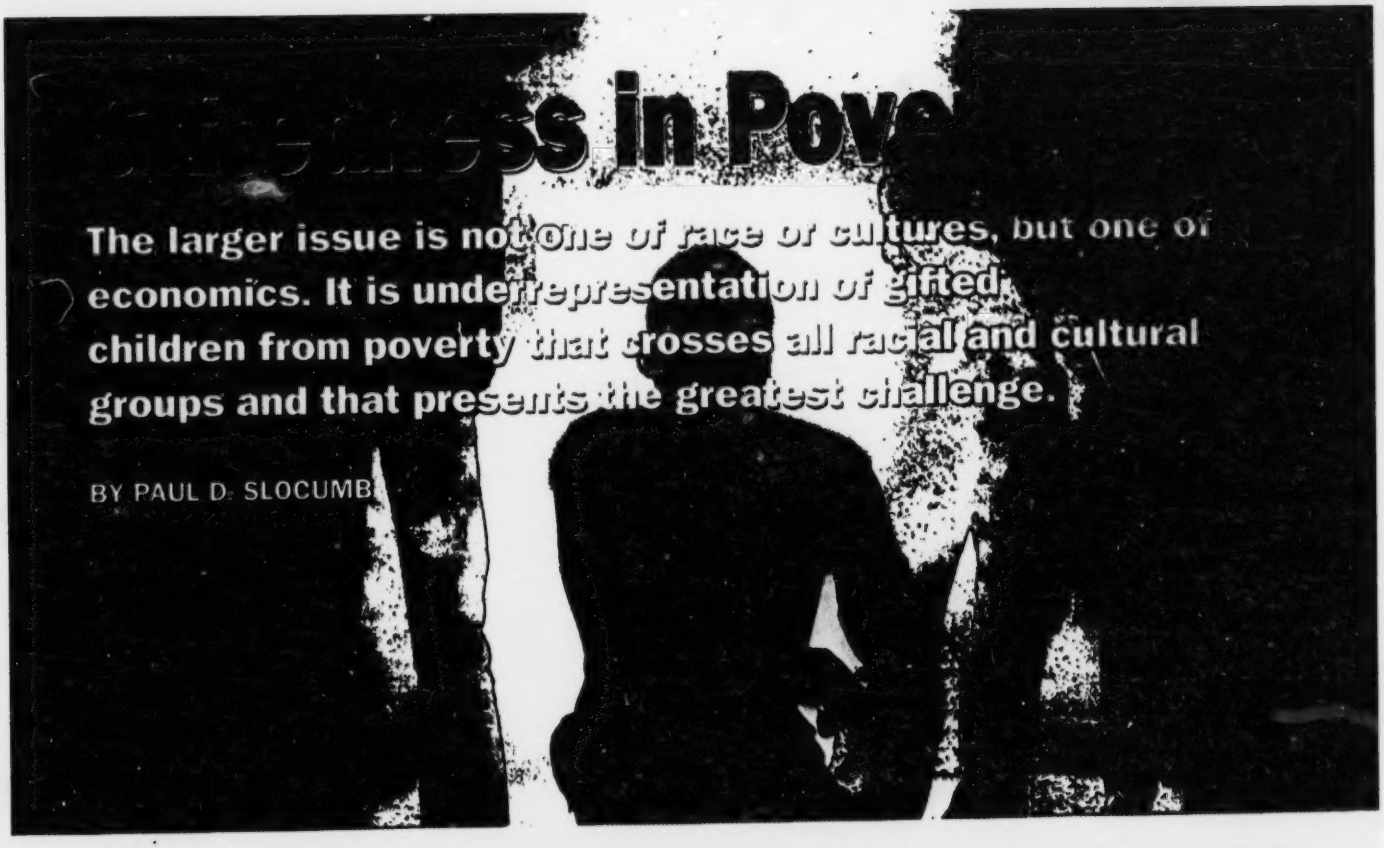
Giftedness in Poverty

The larger issue is not one of race or cultures, but one of economics. It is underrepresentation of gifted children from poverty that crosses all racial and cultural groups and that presents the greatest challenge.

BY PAUL D. SLOCUMB



The lack of racial and cultural diversity in programs for the gifted has become a major concern in many school districts and states. While some have made great progress in this area, efforts to identify gifted children who come from low socioeconomic backgrounds have not fared as well. Frequently, a lack of diversity in gifted programs is often viewed as too few students from different racial or ethnic groups. The larger issue is not one of race or cultures, but one of economics. Identifying gifted students from middle-class homes, regardless of their racial or cultural group, is easier than identifying giftedness in poverty. It is underrepresentation of gifted children from poverty that crosses all racial and cultural groups and that presents the greatest challenge.

Frank Frankfurter, former U. S. Supreme Court Justice said, "There is nothing so unequal as the equal treatment of unequals." Potentially gifted students who come from poverty, however, are frequently expected to meet the same criteria as students from middle income families even though their life experiences are far less rich than those of middle-class students. As a result, they all too often go unidentified and unserved.

Most identification processes are based upon the notion that all students must be treated alike. Consequently, gifted and talented identification processes are frequently based upon absolute cut-off scores for performance on achievement tests , ability tests, teacher recommendations, grades, or a myriad of other data sources. The expectation that "one size fits all" is defended as "fair." Systems adopt such procedures because they want to rely on hard data if they are called upon to defend their choices. In the process of developing systems of fairness in which all students are treated equally, equity is lost.

Parents want their children to have what they perceive to be the best program, with the best curriculum, for the best students, with the best teachers the school district has to offer. This environment sets the stage for a system that is based upon equality rather than equity. Students who come from backgrounds that are different from middle-class America do not fare well on traditional assessments. Thus, they go unidentified and unserved. Why? They don't meet the standard—the cut-off score(s).

This discrepancy is apparent in gifted programs throughout this country. Though districts have made efforts to eliminate this disparity by using standardized tests that purport to be more culturally fair, disparity remains. Until school personnel address existing factors that continue to perpetuate this disparity, school districts will continue to have minimal success in identifying and serving this subpopulation effectively and efficiently.

"Judging all students as though they have access to the same resources may be treating them equally but it is not equitable."

Point #1: Reframing the purposes of gifted education.

Gifted education is a special program. Special programs exist to address special needs that are not typically met by the mainstream program and the regular classroom teacher. Thus, special programs for the gifted should be created and staffed with teachers who have been trained in meeting the needs of this

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special population. While this is certainly appropriate, students identified and served are typically those who meet criteria that align with school systems' middle-class norms to the exclusion of students who look and behave differently. One of the largest groups of students who look and behave differently consists of those who come from poverty.

The use of IQ scores, standardized achievement scores, and teacher rating scales that look at giftedness from a middle-class perspective will generally yield a gifted population that achieves academically. There is nothing wrong with identifying students who should be identified and served. When the result, however, is a gifted population that does not reflect the demographics of the larger school population, then the identification process needs to be re-examined.

While the identification process is critical, the right teacher is even more critical. A master dentist is not shocked to see a patient in need of major dental work. Though the dentist might be appalled that someone has become so negligent about oral hygiene, it would not deter the master dentist from working on the patient. Master dentists know that their skills can produce beautiful smiles. Master dentists see beyond what is to what can be, given the appropriate treatment over time.

Such is often the case with potentially gifted students from poverty. It takes a master teacher who can see the potential behind the mask of poverty. Gifted students already achieving do not need "fixing." They usually need a little polishing, requiring the skills of a good dental hygienist, not necessarily those of a master dentist; but for the gifted from poverty it is absolutely essential.

All students have the right to master teachers. Potentially gifted students from poverty, however, must have the services of master teachers. Gifted students who are not from poverty typically have master parents who can offer the many opportunities that come with money. Master teachers are the ones who must become advocates for students from poverty once those students have been placed in programs. They must be the ones who can visualize the potential of these students. They must know that because of their interventions, the beautiful smile can become a reality.

Gifted programs must be more than just polishing bright, able learners. They must provide the intervention that helps all gifted students realize their potential. For students from poverty to reap the benefits of such a program, schools must revisit the means used to identify this population. They must also abandon practices that increase the likelihood that these students will drop out of their traditional, middle-class gifted programs. Those practices include expecting that all gifted students must:

- Make high grades consistently
- Display good behavior, be model students
- Have parents who are actively involved in their child's academic program
- Be able to work independently outside of the school day
- Be able to produce products that require resources outside the school
- Be eager to learn
- Be able to work productively with other gifted students

Such practices, such mindsets, almost certainly eliminate many potentially gifted students from poverty. Systemically, districts must design gifted and talented programs with curriculum and master teachers that produce results that would not be produced if the intervention were not provided.

"Understanding concepts and generalizations related to systems may require that teachers understand systems that are integral parts of poverty, such as bartering, food stamps, and hidden communication systems."

Point #2: Recognizing the disparity and significance of environmental opportunities in the identification process

Students who come from poverty do not come to school with the same experiences as those from middle class. Affluence buys opportunities not usually afforded students from poverty. Educated parents typically provide their children with a quality and range of experiences that have a positive impact on things measured in school. In addition to vacations, books, quality day-care programs, computers, and a host of other goods and services, educated parents almost always provide their children with daily interactions that develop facility with language, a skill critical to success in school. Standardized testing, textbooks, and social interactions within the school require vocabularies and sentence structures that are well developed in standard, formal English.

In a longitudinal study of 42 families with preschool age children, Hart and Risely (1995) identified many of these disparities. The 42 families were divided into four groups including: parents who were professional and managerial workers; parents who worked in offices and hospitals; parents who were in construction, factories, and service jobs; and families on welfare. The findings include the following:

- Between the ages of 11 and 18 months, the average number of parent utterances per hour was 642 for the professional group, of which 482 were addressed to the baby. In the office and hospital group, parents averaged 535 utterances per hour, of which 321 were addressed to the baby. In the construction and factory worker group, parents averaged 521 utterances per hour, of which 283 were addressed to the baby. In the welfare group, parents averaged 394 utterances per hour, of which 197 were addressed to the baby.

  Finding: The major difference among the four groups was in the number of verbal exchanges that occurred, and this difference was strongly associated with the socio-economic status of the families.
- The utterances of professional parents were not only greater in number but also richer in the use of nouns, modifiers, past tense verbs, declarative sentences, and affirmative feedback. In the welfare families, the utterances were both fewer in quantity and less rich in nouns, modifiers, verbs, past tense verbs and clauses. After initiating or responding to their children, welfare parents continued talking to their children less than half as often as did working-class parents.

  Finding: In each hour of their lives, welfare children received less than half the language experience of working-class children.

- Professional parents gave their children an average of five prohibitions per hour whereas the welfare parents gave their children an average of 11 prohibitions per hour. Additionally, the welfare parents gave more negative imperatives ("Don't," "Stop," "Quit") than professional families.
- Professional parents gave their children affirmative feedback every other minute, more than 30 times per hour. This was twice as often as that of working-class parents, and more than five times as often as that of parents in welfare families.
  Finding: Children in welfare families heard a prohibition twice as often as they heard affirmative feedback.

The language experiences of children during preschool years significantly affect their performance in school. Schools are middle-class institutions. As such there is an expectation that when children enter school they:

- Can speak in complete sentences
- Ask questions
- Use declarative sentences to express wants, needs, and feelings
- Sequence, and work cooperatively with other children by displaying socially acceptable behaviors
- Understand cause and effect relationships

Students who come from poverty typically do not have preschool experiences that put these things in place. Therefore, without factoring in the environmental circumstances, chances are slight that the student from poverty will be perceived as "bright." Ironically, such students are much more likely to be referred for testing for a disability.

Point #3: Recognizing the disparity in early childhood experiences and factoring that into the identification process.

When school personnel use traditional measures such as IQ and achievement scores to identify giftedness, most of those identified as gifted will be those who come from families who have enriched language experiences in their home environments. In *Removing the Mask: Giftedness in Poverty*, Slocumb and Payne (2000) purport that in educated households children have environmental opportunities that push their skills and performance higher. These opportunities outside the school environment result in higher measured test performance in school.

Table 1 Differences in Environmental Opportunities

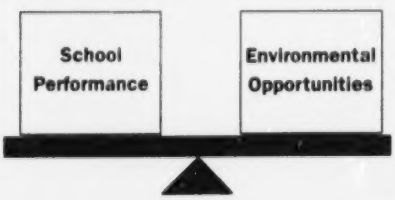
Resources	Result of sufficient resources	Result of insufficient resources
Financial	Health care, books, toys, computers, vacations, transportation, food, shelter	Lack of prenatal care; poor nutrition; lack of physical space for adequate motor development; lack of experiences through toys and play for children; unemployment; basic necessities lacking
Emotional	Task commitment; persistence; ability to reason through and verbalize situations and solve problems, articulate feelings; ability to control anger and behavior	Impulsive behavior; lack of causal reasoning; lack of language to express feelings; physical punishment of children for misbehavior; may curse at children when scolding them; models aggression to resolve conflict
Mental	Ability to read, write, and compute; presence of books, magazines, puzzles, and games; ability to function with day-to-day tasks, learning new things as needed; can problem-solve	Absence of books, puzzles; parents unable to read to children; dependence on television for entertainment and information; limited job possibilities; poor problem solving skills; little experience with abstract reasoning; decisions made on basis of likes and dislikes
Spiritual	Environment of hope, empowerment, inner strength, self-worth, purposefulness	Personal efforts perceived to be insignificant; feelings of hopelessness; dependence on fate and luck
Physical	Healthy; able to perform daily routines; ability to work; alert; energized	Poor health; diets high in sugar and fats; poorly developed sensory motor and ocular motor systems; adults miss work and have no sick leave benefits
Support systems	Friends and relatives available to help in times of need; ability to hire help when needed; can find answers when needed; physical and emotional support available from others	Quality day care unavailable; older children caring for younger children; high stress levels because there is no help; feelings acted out rather than verbalized and dealt with logically and rationally; lack of knowledge about how to deal with institutions
Relationships/ role models	Presence of nurturing adults; feelings of love, caring, safety; knows help available in times of need; trusts others; attitude of "I can"	Feelings of being isolated; unable to find answers; feelings of abandonment and victimization; unable to show affection toward others; distrust of others
Hidden rules	Adheres to rules of social class; is accepted by social class to which he/she belongs; can adapt and survive in social situations; knows expectations of group	Unable to understand rules in workplace; loses jobs; difficulty in communicating with social-service organizations because of lack of understanding of "rules"; distrust of institutions

Note: From *Removing the Mask: Giftedness in Poverty*, by P. D. Slocumb and R. K. Payne, 2000

In poor, uneducated households, children have limited access to environmental opportunities that have a positive impact on skill and performance levels. They don't get identified as gifted because their skills are lower than the expectations, not because of their intellectual potential. The less opportunity in the environment, the lower the test scores will be as measured by the school. When gifted children are identified on the basis of traditional measures without factoring in the impact of the environment, what gets identified is opportunity and not giftedness (Slocumb and Payne, 2000).

To identify gifted students from poverty, their environment must be a component in the identification process. *The Environmental Opportunities Profile* (Slocumb & Payne, 2000) achieves this. The *Environmental Opportunities Profile* (EOP) is designed as an interview instrument to account for the lack of resources within the environment that inhibit or delay the learning process. Poverty is more than just not having money. "Poverty is the extent to which an individual does without resources" (Payne, 1998, p. 16). The availability or lack of resources yields very different results. Students from poverty, middle class, and even from wealth may lack some of these resources. It is the degree to which a student lacks these resources that determines the extent of a student's impoverishment. Table 1 illustrates the impact these resources have on the home environment of children

Identifying elements within the environment that inhibit a child's development allows school personnel to calculate a "handicapping score" much as one might have for a game of golf. Use of the EOP, results in a numerical score that can be juxtaposed against scores based on a student's performance on standardized tests. The following diagram illustrates this paradigm.



Resources affect student performance. Judging all students as though they have access to the same resources may be treating them equally but it is not equitable. In 1993 the U.S. Department of Education defined gifted and talented students as "Children and youth of outstanding talent who perform at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment." In practice, environment and experience are rarely considered and the comparative factor typically used is that of age (grade level). Students who come from poverty are in fact not compared with their peer group. They are compared with their grade-level peers, regardless of the differences that exist between their home environments and subsequent life experiences.

"When gifted children are identified on the basis of traditional measures without factoring in the impact of the environment, what gets identified is opportunity and not giftedness"

Point #4: Using non-traditional measures to identify non-traditional students. Lacking resources within their environment, students from poverty typically do not perform as well on standardized tests as do students from middle-class backgrounds. Using more non-traditional measures, however, can reveal strengths within students from poverty. To discover these strengths, it is helpful to assess them on activities and performances in which language is not the driving force. Most standardized tests require a facility with language that most students from poverty simply do not have. Problem-solving activities using manipulatives are helpful. Portfolios that show a student's abilities in the areas of critical and creative thinking are also useful. Teacher rating scales, such as the Slocumb-Payne Teacher Perception Inventory (Slocumb & Payne, 2000), that have teachers look at the concomitant attributes of giftedness are essential because gifted students from poverty frequently manifest their gifted attributes in socially unacceptable ways.

The identification process needs to look at a preponderance of evidence rather than establishing cut-off scores. Looking at a variety and a wide range of student performances over time, and looking at that performance in relationship to the student's environmental opportunities can reveal strengths that would otherwise go undetected in processes steeped in middle-class values and behaviors.

Point #5: Detecting the strengths of students hidden behind the mask of poverty. Systems must look beyond the mask of poverty to see the strengths and talents that students from poverty bring to the system. For example, a five-year-old student who comes to school and has a storehouse of knowledge about dinosaurs or the NASA space program would probably be perceived as a very bright student. The five-year-old who comes to school and knows all the words to a variety of rap songs by a popular rap artist, or the names and statistics of all the players on a national basketball team, might not be perceived as bright, especially if the student does not display an interest in the content the school presents.

Educators must be trained to focus on identifying students who have the ability to store knowledge rather than focusing on judging the merits of the knowledge the students have stored. The young student from poverty is going to reflect a knowledge base of those things that are valued in the culture of poverty. Entertainment is one of those values. The degree to which students from poverty have such information stored when compared to their peers who come from poverty is what needs to be considered. It is the job of the program to provide such students with opportunities and motivation to want to store other kinds of information.

Middle-class educators tend to recognize the creativity inherent in a cleverly written story created by a child as part of a language arts activity. However, when the student from poverty spins an original, clever tale to convince the teacher that someone else committed an offense, the creativity is not acknowledged and the behavior is admonished.

Gifted students from poverty are not going to look like middle-class gifted students in a multitude of ways. It is the job of the program, however, to identify these students and then to channel their gifts and talents in a manner that allows them to be successful in a middle-class system. Students who are survivors in poverty develop

Slocumb—Payne Teacher Perception Inventory

A Scale for Rating Superior Students from Diverse Backgrounds

The scale is designed to obtain a teacher's perception of a student's characteristics as a potentially gifted/talented student within the context of a particular classroom or school.

The items are derived from the research literature dealing with characteristics of gifted and creative people. Each descriptor is designed to be "two sides of the same coin." There are 19 items total; three illustrations are given below.

Perception of Attributes	seldom or never	occasionally	frequently	almost always	frequently	occasionally	seldom or never	Perception of Attributes
1. Curious about information; inquisitive; doesn't accept information at first glance; questions and pushes for more information	1	2	3	4	3	2	1	1. Obnoxious with questions; likes to "stump" people with hard questions; enjoys questions with "shock value"; questions authority; unwilling to follow rules
4. Understands subtleties of language in his/her primary language; uses language in powerful way; displays unique sense of humor; able to use language to build personal relationships	1	2	3	4	3	2	1	4. "Smart mouth"; master at putdowns of others; uses humor in destructive manner; unable to relate to peers because his/her sense of humor isn't as sophisticated; class clown
13. Unwilling to learn facts to support generalizations; can be great "talker" but is unable to produce because work lacks substance.	1	2	3	4	3	2	1	13. Sees patterns in things; can transfer learning to new situations; sees the big picture; discovers new information; supports generalizations with facts/details.

For more information, see Slocumb and Payne (2000) as reviewed on page 58.

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many skills and talents. It is their creativity, their problem solving, and their perseverance that has allowed them to survive—in some cases under extreme circumstances. That does not mean that they will do well on standard creativity worksheets. Could the middle-class gifted student survive in the student's neighborhood of poverty for three days?

Point #6: Differentiating the differentiated curriculum for gifted children in poverty.

Top-end teaching yields top-end results; bottom-end teaching yields bottom-end learning. Students from poverty are frequently perceived as deficient learners because of their lack of experience. Poverty is a world based on concreteness not abstraction. When survival is a driving force, dealing with abstract ideas does not generally have concrete pay-offs. For example, doing well in school so one can go to college appears very abstract to someone in poverty because it is in the future and does not help one survive in daily life. To a middle-class person who is future oriented, this does not appear logical. Middle-class families recognize that education is a critical component in one's success in the future job market as an adult.

Much of schooling is abstract, studying things that happened long ago, labeling words and phrases so language can be dissected and manipulated, and trying to understand things like cells and chemical reactions that cannot be seen. Not seeing the relevancy of school learning to daily survival in the neighborhood, and lacking essential life experiences in the environment produces students who come to school with skill gaps. These skill gaps become a major focus for educators. How can students be gifted when they do not know the basics? Programs focusing on what student are missing, all but guarantee that students from poverty will never "catch-up" with the other middle-class gifted students.

Students from poverty must be afforded the same high level learning as gifted students from middle class. The challenge is to fill-in the learning gaps while teaching to the higher end of learning. Commenting on the instructional needs of gifted students who are limited English language learners, Kaplan (1999, p. 20), states "fill-in-the-gaps activities must be identified as inherent features of an exemplary differentiated gifted curriculum and not just as good teaching practices. Too often, limited English language learners who are gifted are either excluded from the differentiated gifted curriculum because of limited experience, or the experience is given to students in a limited manner." The same is true of gifted students from poverty.

To get students to the higher end of learning requires that teachers understand the culture of poverty and help students tap into their life experiences as a source of energy to move to higher levels of learning. Understanding concepts and generalizations related to systems may require that teachers understand systems that are integral parts of poverty, such as bartering, food stamps, and hidden communication systems. When these are used as referents for students, they can be brought forward to understand more complex, abstract systems that are part of the differentiated curriculum for the gifted. What is part of the students' concrete world of poverty must be used as the bridge to get to the higher learning.

Point #7: Districts must deal with political realities while being responsive to the needs of a more diverse gifted population.

As school districts move toward a more inclusionary, diverse gifted program, they must face some realities. Programs that have served middle-class gifted students for many years cannot be changed quickly. Redefining the purpose of the gifted program and developing an identification process that includes more diversity may not be popular among the school's constituents. School personnel should never refrain from identifying and serving a gifted student from poverty when found at any grade level. Systemically, however, a district needs to transition into its new model slowly and methodically. A new generation of gifted programming must be created.

Districts need to begin at the primary grade levels and then move that more diverse group of gifted students up through the system. Training teachers along the way in effective teaching practices for this more diverse gifted population must be done as the program expands to subsequent grade levels. This grade-by-grade expansion is not only politically smart—it is the way to build successful programs. Parents have an image of what their school district's gifted program is and is not. When that image begins to shift, parents will have to be re-educated. Some will be very reluctant to embrace a program that includes a more diverse population, especially one that includes students from poverty. Because those from the middle class do not understand the culture of poverty any more than people from poverty understand the middle class, there will be those who say, "I don't want my child in the same class with those kids." Having a diverse gifted population begin together in the early grades and then move through the system, allows those involved time to learn and appreciate one another. School personnel must be willing to shift the paradigm for gifted education, and they must be willing to fight the political fight.

Conclusion

Gifted students come from all segments of the student population. When one population is served disproportionately in comparison to other subgroups in the student population, equity is compromised. Gifted students from all segments of the population must have the same access to the gifted program. To achieve equity and excellence for all gifted students, school personnel must begin the process of examining current practices in identification and in instruction. This will bring about change. School personnel must be willing to accept the challenges that come with this change. The system must advocate for those students who have no advocate. Gifted students in poverty must be given a voice and that voice begins with educators who are committed to equity and excellence in gifted programming for all students.

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Mentoring and Poverty
Change the World

BY PHILLIP FRANSHAW

What do you see when you look into the eyes of a child? Hope? Promise?

When you speak to children, what do you learn? Do your questions reveal their ambition? Their passion?

We must see children. We must listen to children. All children have the capacity to succeed. This point is especially important for children in poverty. These children are often ignored because they lack the personal resources necessary to protect and promote their right to a promising future. Each day they face a world of hunger, violence, and neglect. Survival is their principal motivation, and innocence a luxury they can ill-afford. Nonetheless, children in poverty can achieve and prosper if someone takes an interest—if someone dares to make a difference.

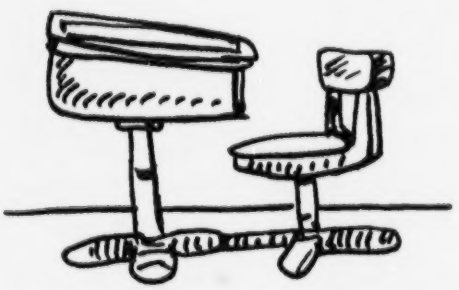

ILLUSTRATION BY JON RAMSOM

"My teachers determined that I would be less disruptive in class if I were separated from the masses, so I attended class part-time."

I am blessed. My mother nurtured my curiosity beneath a firm hand until she determined I could take care of myself. Then she left welfare and joined the ranks of the working poor, taking a job at a local refinery. She was the first female processing engineer at Atlantic Richfield. Such work entailed ten-day, eight-hour rotating shifts of manipulating pumps and valves, monitoring circuit boards, and, if necessary, fighting fires. Because overtime meant another full shift at 150% rate of pay, mother took as much overtime as she could get. But after a sixteen-hour day at the refinery, she had time only to sleep in order to return to work.

She would answer the alarm for work regardless of the torment she suffered. As a young black female, she was perceived as an intruder in a white male environment. She answered the racist jokes and sexual comments with a sharp tongue that would blunt the offense without escalating the tension. Ultimately, she earned the respect of her associates.

Early Responsibilities

Alone my mother bore the burden of providing for my younger brother, Greg (eighteen months my junior), and me. My father left the scene long before my memory could record his presence. There was little tolerance for childish behavior as our roles and responsibilities were clear. My mother provided food, clothing, and shelter. I was the "man of the house" charged with performing well in school, maintaining the house, and caring for my brother.

Each September my mother escorted me to the local public school so that she could meet my new teacher. She explained to this principal caregiver that she worked long hours and often would not be available for parent conferences; but if there were ever a problem, she wanted to be called at work. She promised to remedy the issue right away.

Such remedies were swift and severe. I learned early to mitigate negative communication between home and school by achieving good grades and often accepting the school's prescription for discipline rather than risk a home solution. I was a precocious child prone to questioning everything. I often completed my assigned work before the other students, and then would talk. I earned straight A's but teachers found my conduct disruptive. Report cards included little praise and I often thought myself lucky to survive the event without a lashing.

Greg struggled in school but he was a nice boy. I was not sufficiently mature to be of any material benefit to him as a tutor or role model. Nonetheless, I protected him from the drug and criminal elements in our neighborhood. We seldom had a baby-sitter; there was no need. Fear of my mother's wrath was a great motivator. As a first grader, I would pick Greg up from the nursery after school and then proceed directly home. The streets were dangerous, so mother

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instructed us to hold hands and walk home carefully and quickly. She identified all potential predators; she told us to avoid strangers and lock the doors. We were not permitted to play outside when my mother was away. She would call at random intervals to make sure we were inside. So, we watched television—hours and hours of it.

When she expected to work late, mother would prepare dinner and leave it on the stove. At other times I cooked. I learned my way about the kitchen at an early age, preparing hot food like macaroni and cheese, hamburger dishes, and other simple oven, broiler, or stovetop meals before the age of nine. Many of those early meals were disasters, but we threw nothing away.

Following dinner, I completed my chores including clearing the table, then cleaning the kitchen and dishes. If I failed to do a complete and thorough job, mother would make me do it over. I remember her waking me once at midnight to wash all the dishes—all plates, bowls, coffee cups, glasses, and silverware—after she found a dirty plate in the cabinet. The lesson she taught me was: *Any job worth doing is one done well.*

Someone Takes an Interest

In middle school, I was tall, awkward, and not very popular. Acne, glasses, and a serious demeanor left me on the fringe of the "cool" crowd. My teachers determined that I would be less disruptive in class if I were separated from the masses, so I attended class part-time. On Mondays I picked up assignments; Wednesdays I submitted the work; and Fridays I was permitted to sit in class and take the tests. The rest of the time was spent in the library and gym.

I worked quietly in the library without interruption. After completing my work, I read or went to the gym. Robert Capers, the head coach, noticed that I was seldom where one would think I was supposed to be. He took time to learn how I had been displaced in the school and often permitted me to sit in his office and read *Sports Illustrated* or just talk. He was the first male to ever show an interest in me. His white skin had no bearing on our relationship. I grew to love him as a father.

I attempted to play a variety of sports including football, basketball, tennis, swimming, track, and cross-country. I had neither the skill nor the coordination for most sports, but I could run well. Coach Capers encouraged me to work hard. His mantra—*Everyone likes to win; few are willing to pay the price*—still rings clear. It was not enough to train or compete in school and AAU events. He insisted that I also become a student of the sport. I traveled with him across the state of Texas to attend meets. It did not matter if boys or girls were competing. I developed a passion for the sport.

Through this passion, I developed discipline and grew to understand the meaning of commitment. Then he exposed me to something that changed my life completely. One day he invited me to work with him selling programs at Rice University football games. As one can imagine, I was thrilled with watching the spectacle of college football, especially with the chance to see young football players like Tommy Kramer, Billy Simms, Everson Walls, and Earl Campbell. Yet the spectacle gave way to the majesty of the university environment. Walking across campus past dorms, libraries, and lecture halls, I began to project myself into such a place. I imagined myself as a college student enjoying the opportunities and benefits that come to those who are educated.

"Coach Capers encouraged me to work hard. His mantra—*Everyone likes to win; few are willing to pay the price*—still rings clear."

Our conversations over time turned from sports to my dreams. We talked about attending college, owning businesses, exploring space, and practicing law or medicine. He showed me that my only limitations were those that I placed upon myself. Any of these random ideas seemed out of reach without money, since money is the force that turns the wheel that spins the world. Suddenly I felt lost until he reminded me that — *Your only limitations are those that you place on yourself.* He encouraged me to remember that education will unlock any door. He would tell me, *Dream while completing the work at hand.*

A New Opportunity

During my ninth-grade year, the dream began to unfold with a call to my mother from my English teacher, Mrs. Thorne. Instead of reporting some offense, she recommended that I attend a Jesuit preparatory school. My mother stated flatly that she could not afford the expense of private education. Mrs. Thorne persisted and convinced my mother to complete an application and permit me to sit for the entrance exam. I was later offered a scholarship.

That fall I found myself commuting twenty miles each way to a place so foreign

SIGNIFICANT FACTORS THAT ASSIST CHILDREN ON THE ROAD OUT OF POVERTY

1. No significant learning takes place without a significant relationship.
2. Children in poverty are frequently robbed of their childhood because they must assume adult responsibilities at a young age.
3. Resiliency comes about when children see their situation as temporary; they determine to not be a victim at a young age.
4. Perseverance is developed under the umbrella of survival.
5. Exposure to another world, another way of life is critical. Visiting a university can give a concrete image of a dream that was at an abstract level.
6. Students from poverty must have support systems. A coach or other educator can fill that role.
7. Behaviors among children from poverty are diagnostic and frequently the result of not understanding the middle class rules by which schools operate.

—*Paul Slocumb*

that it could have been on another planet. The Jesuit's academic demands were significantly greater than anything I had encountered before. I had three-to-five hours of homework each night. Math class was strenuous, and I found myself in the middle of the pack rather than at the top of the class.

Socially I felt isolated. I was one of five black students in the sophomore class. We seldom saw one another except at lunch when we ate together. White students openly threw about racial slurs without teacher restraint. Reaction by black students resulted in expulsion so we didn't complain. The playing fields, courts, and the track were the only places where white and black students mixed.

After my first two weeks at Jesuit, I celebrated the Labor Day holiday by not opening a book, only to find myself sobbing Monday night before school. I did not want to return. The commute, the expectations between home and school, and the isolation were too much. Mrs. Thorne called me in the midst of my breakdown and calmed me. She declared that she never thought quitting would be among my many new experiences. This challenge spurred me to pull an all-nighter to complete Tuesday's homework. I committed myself to finishing the year. Only at year-end would I consider the question of remaining enrolled.

Until then I found solace in running. After class each day, I would head down to the field house to meet Jerry Martinez, the Jesuit track coach. He was often thought to be mean and uncompromising, but I came to know differently.

Overcoming Obstacles

Coach Martinez demanded consistent, quality performance, and permitted no distractions. Only academic performance superseded training. I struggled with math. The instructor, a six-foot-five, two hundred forty-pound priest whom I imagined as Darth Vader in a cassock, intimidated me. His name was Fr. Laniger. Coach Martinez instructed me to speak with him and forbade me to train until we came to some resolution.

Fr. Laniger and I wrestled over Algebra II an additional hour each day. Communication eased my fear of him, and success in the classroom relieved much of my anxiety about the school environment. I accepted the fact that I could not change the social fabric of the Jesuit community, but I could earn the respect of its members.

Transportation to and from Jesuit and school activities was always a problem. My mother could never drive me. From time to time, I would ride the bus ninety minutes one way. When I could get a seat, I would do homework or study. Other times a classmate would pick me up. Neither situation was convenient or dependable. However, when Coach Martinez realized transportation was an issue, he created a solution. He drove a great distance out of his way before and after school for me as one of many students that he took care of. We drove across town in three different directions before arriving at school. I was often the first to be picked up and the last dropped off—out the door at 5:30 a.m. and in as late as 8:30 p.m.

The ride permitted me to see how others lived. I thought I had it bad, but nothing in my experience prepared me to witness the squalor from which others emerged. Riding with Coach Martinez I developed an appreciation for the strength of the human spirit and its capacity to find higher ground. Sometimes we would stop for donuts or burgers. Coach Martinez talked to us about school, girls, drugs, and alcohol. He treated us with such compassion and magnanimity that we believed there were no obstacles—only opportunities.

Conclusion

I remained at Jesuit and went on to earn degrees at Georgetown University and the University of Texas at Austin. In addition to enjoying a loving family and a successful career in finance, I listen to children. I share my time. Two years ago I piloted a sports-based mentoring program which served as many as twenty-four young men who dreamed of attending Stanford, Harvard, Duke, and University of Michigan. I am President and Head Coach of the Space City Stars, a sports-based mentoring program using basketball as a medium to foster communication and cooperation among Houston area youth. Children of different racial, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds participate in this program bringing with them a diversity of talent and experience. Such exposure fosters an awareness and appreciation for the diversity of their community nurturing the communication and cooperation skills necessary to succeed from the classroom to the board room. I continue to develop other programs that will allow children the ability to see the infinite wonder of their own imaginations.

Mentor a child and change the world. ■

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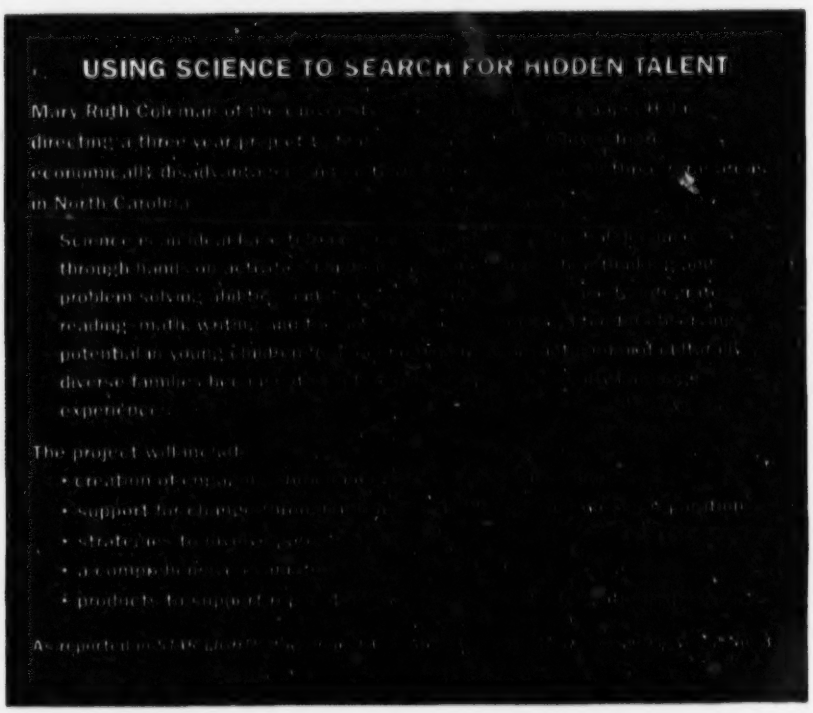

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Coyotes that Crossed in the West

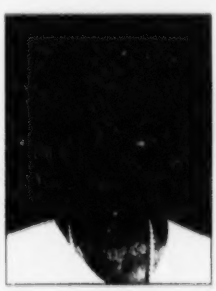
In an unfamiliar learning environment, an educator finds a new understanding of the feelings of culturally different and economically disadvantaged students

BY DIANA FREUDENSPRUNG

Recently I reached a point in my career where I felt a desperate need for revitalization. I was an assistant principal in a large urban junior high school with a population of more than 1200 students. My days were filled with discipline referrals, parent conferences, and more discipline referrals. I had previously been a gifted and talented program facilitator and acutely missed the world of educating gifted students.

My deputy superintendent, Dr. Paul Slocumb, was my mentor as well as my boss and my friend. He recognized my need for renewal and suggested a trip to Dallas, Texas, to hear a speaker by the name of June Maker who was working with multiple intelligences and gifted students in poverty. I had previously attended a workshop given by Howard Gardner and this sounded like a great enrichment session. Little did I know the trip would have such impact on my life.

During Dr. Maker's session I again felt the spark of new ideas. I waited to speak with her after the session and asked how I might expand my knowledge and understanding of the ideas she had presented. Dr. Maker said she had plans for an institute at the University of Arizona and was currently seeking funding. We exchanged addresses but I did not hear from her for more than a year. Then in March 1998, a letter came with the return address: Dr. June Maker, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona. She invited me to attend her Discover Institute for working with culturally diverse and gifted students from poverty.



"...the Navajo teacher by the name of Judy invited me to be part of her group. I had an intense feeling of relief. Someone had finally accepted me. How could I have these feelings? I am an adult!"

The Institute included an incredible group of educators: Todd Seiler, author of *Think Like a Genius* and *Breaking the Mind Barrier*; Richard Shope, NASA Science Educator and mime artist who studied with mime master Marcel Marceau; Ron Anderson, a nationally and internationally known artist; Sylvia Rodgers, Associate Professor for Gifted Education at University of Arizona; and Rex Jim, lecturer for Navajo Community College on Navajo language and philosophy.

The Institute was an intense seven-day experience in which I was expected to attend classes from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., complete a field study, design an interdisciplinary unit from that field study, complete a position paper, produce products involving all of the multiple intelligences, review research, interpret case studies, observe and participate in gifted and talented assessment, and somehow find time to eat and sleep. Nonetheless, I considered this to be an opportunity of a lifetime. I was not able to convince any of my colleagues to attend with me, so off I went alone.

Starting the Journey

I had never been to Arizona and had no idea what to expect. I arrived in Tucson at approximately 9:00 p.m. and settled into the university dorm room I had reserved in order to cut down on expenses. I was prepared to share the room with another Institute participant, but learned that this person had canceled. Again, I was alone.

The next morning I was amazed at the brightness of the sun glaring into my room at 6:15 a.m. This was very different from the Gulf Coast area of Texas where I lived. Why had I not seen the size of the mountains and the slope of the terrain the night before?

I located a map of the university, found the cafeteria, and began to walk and walk and walk. I noticed the heat was very different from what I was used to in my part of Texas. By the time I arrived at the cafeteria I had developed leg cramps. I checked my map and to my dismay, found that my first class was on the opposite side of campus. There was no time for breakfast, and in spite of my leg cramps, off I went.

In my first class I discovered there was no one from Texas. The largest portion of the class consisted of Navajo teachers from an Arizona reservation, a group of teachers with their principal from Tennessee, teachers from Alaska, and several educators from California. We were expected to choose a partner for the first activity. I knew no one in the class and quickly found I was the odd person out. Dr. Maker became my partner. The morning progressed and soon it was time for lunch. Everyone quickly disappeared and I began my long trek across campus for lunch.

A Navajo Teacher Nameed Judy

When I finally arrived at the cafeteria, I

again had severe leg cramps. One of the Navajo teachers walked over to my table and introduced herself as Judy. She quickly recognized that I was not from Arizona and suggested that I significantly increase my intake of water, as it was currently 107 degrees outside. She explained that Arizona heat was tricky because the humidity was so low. I thanked her for the tip and promptly purchased several bottles of water before starting my long walk back to class.

The afternoon class went very quickly, and once again I began the journey across campus. This time I was searching for the library in order to complete my late afternoon research and to type my notes. By the time I reached the library, all computers were taken and the library closed at 7:00 p.m. Now I began to feel stressed! I completed my research and shortly before 7:00 p.m. noticed Judy at one of the computers. She motioned me over to the computer and explained that computer time was on a reserved basis. She took me to the reservation desk and helped me schedule computer time for the rest of the week. I thanked her and then went off to my dorm with my bottles of water, my computer schedule for the rest of the week, a substantial amount of untyped notes, and an overwhelming feeling of aloneness.

The third morning began as the first and second: long walks to breakfast, long walks to class, and a day with more work than I ever imagined I could complete. However, there was one difference—the Navajo teacher by the name of Judy invited me to be part of her group. I had an intense feeling of relief. Someone had finally accepted me. How could I have these feelings? I am an adult!

At lunchtime, the Navajo teachers invited me to ride in their van to the cafeteria. Most of the conversation was spoken in Navajo until one of them realized that I did not understand the language. The group decided that out of respect for me, they would speak only English when I was with them. During lunch they asked me questions about educating gifted students in Texas and how the identification process worked in my district. They asked many questions about Texas and and wanted to know why I had such a heavy Texas drawl. I explained I had never lived anywhere except Texas and they said that no one in their group had visited Texas. We agreed to continue our conversation after we completed our nightly research in the library. And they invited me to join their study group which gave me an even greater feeling of acceptance.

Connections

My days were filled with classes, research, and exchanges at every meal about the Navajo and Texas cultures. They shared how nature was a vital part of their teaching because of its importance in their culture. They shared their difficulties in working with administrators who did not understand the significance of including parts of their cultural background within their teaching. They shared their frustrations of working with obviously gifted yet intensely poor students within the gifted and talented program, where funds were just not available for the extra support system these students needed. We discovered that in spite of the distance that separated us, in spite of our different cultures, we shared the same difficulties and concerns. We had connected.

"I seek out opportunities to say to that culturally different student those four important words, 'Tell me about you.'"

We were expected to complete several projects as part of the Institute. Throughout the remainder of the week I worked with the Navajo group. Their connection to nature was apparent in each project. We were required to design and create a symbol for each multiple intelligence using broken tiles and a sandbox; our group included an animal or a component of nature in each one we designed.

We were expected to research and visit a site of educational importance in or around Tucson, and develop an interdisciplinary unit related to that site. Most of the group chose to visit Native American art galleries or museums. I chose the Biosphere, an encapsulated man-made environment located in the mountains above Tucson. My Navajo friends advised me to look at how, in their opinion, the Biosphere was not compatible with the terrain of the mountains and how the designers chose not to be conscious of the natural surrounding. I had not considered viewing the Biosphere from that perspective. From their suggested observation, a unit emerged.

The Last Night

My last night in Tucson was shared with my six Navajo friends. They took me through one of the reservations where we saw some of the intense poverty in which some of their students live. We drove through part of the desert at dusk and watched tarantulas come out of the cooling desert to the warmth of the highway. I stood with my Navajo friends on a deserted road gazing up at a mountain and viewing with awe the observatory sitting upon the highest peak. It was then that Judy turned and said, "Ah, look behind you! The coyotes crossed in the west. It is a Navajo sign of good luck."

On my journey back to Houston, I reflected on my Arizona experiences and began to understand the difficulties and feelings which culturally different students must go through in American schools. My experience took me to a place with very different terrain and temperature. I had physiological problems from the temperature that I did not readily understand. I felt an intense aloneness as I had no colleagues or friends to support me. I did not know the system within the university to access computers. I did not understand one word of the Navajo language nor did I understand their culture. I became painfully aware of my pronounced Texas drawl. Reflecting back, I am certain that little learning took place during those first three days. It was only when I felt accepted by my Navajo friends that the intended learning began to take place. If I felt this much anxiety as an adult, what tremendous anxiety must a child experience when facing a new learning environment!

A New Resolve

Since my experience in Arizona, I've become careful never to let a culturally different student go unnoticed. I take great care to recognize a project so carefully created by an economically disadvantaged student who created something literally from nothing. I seek out opportunities to say to that culturally different student those four important words, "Tell me about you."

My career in education has been revitalized. I credit my deeper understanding of culturally diverse and economically disadvantaged students to a caring and supportive deputy superintendent who nurtured my need for knowledge, an innovative professor who allowed me the opportunity to expand that knowledge, and six Navajo teachers who took the time to give me the experience of "...the coyotes that crossed in the west." ■

DIANA FREUDENSPRUNG is principal at Wessendorff Middle School in the Lamar Consolidated Independent School District in Rosenberg, Texas.

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The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented

RESEARCH-BASED RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

The following resources are monographs designed primarily for parents and educators.

Some Children Under Some Conditions: TV and the High Potential Kid
R. Abelman, 1992, RBDM 9206, $15.00

Considerations and Strategies for Parenting the Gifted Child
J. Alvino, 1995, RM95218, $10.00

Helping Your Child Find Success at School: A Guide for Hispanic Parents
1994, RM94202, $3.00

Family Influences on the Achievement of Economically Disadvantaged Students: Implications for Gifted Identification and Programming
S. L. Hunsaker, M. M. Frasier, L. L King, & others
1995, RM95206, $5.00

Reading With Young Children
N. E. Jackson, & C. M. Roller, 1993
RBDM 9302, $15.00

Parenting the Very Young, Gifted Child
N. M. Robinson, 1993
$8.00, RBDM 9308

Parents Nurturing Math-Talented Young Children
B. Waxman, N. M. Robinson, & S. Mukhopadhyay, 1996
RM96230, $8.00

The following resources are brochures designed primarily for parents and educators. Some brochures are available in Spanish.

What Parents and Communities Need to Know About Bilingual Children: Interpreting and Translating

Lo que Deben Saber los Padres y la Comunidad Acerca de los Niños y Jóvenes Bilingües Que Interpretan y Traducen
H. Brookes, & C. Angelleli
English–A9817, 1998
Spanish–B9911, 1999
$0.50

What Parents Need to Know About Recognizing and Encouraging Interests, Strengths, and Talents of Gifted Adolescents
M. A. B. Delcourt, 1998
A9820, $0.50

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M. K. Gavin, 2000
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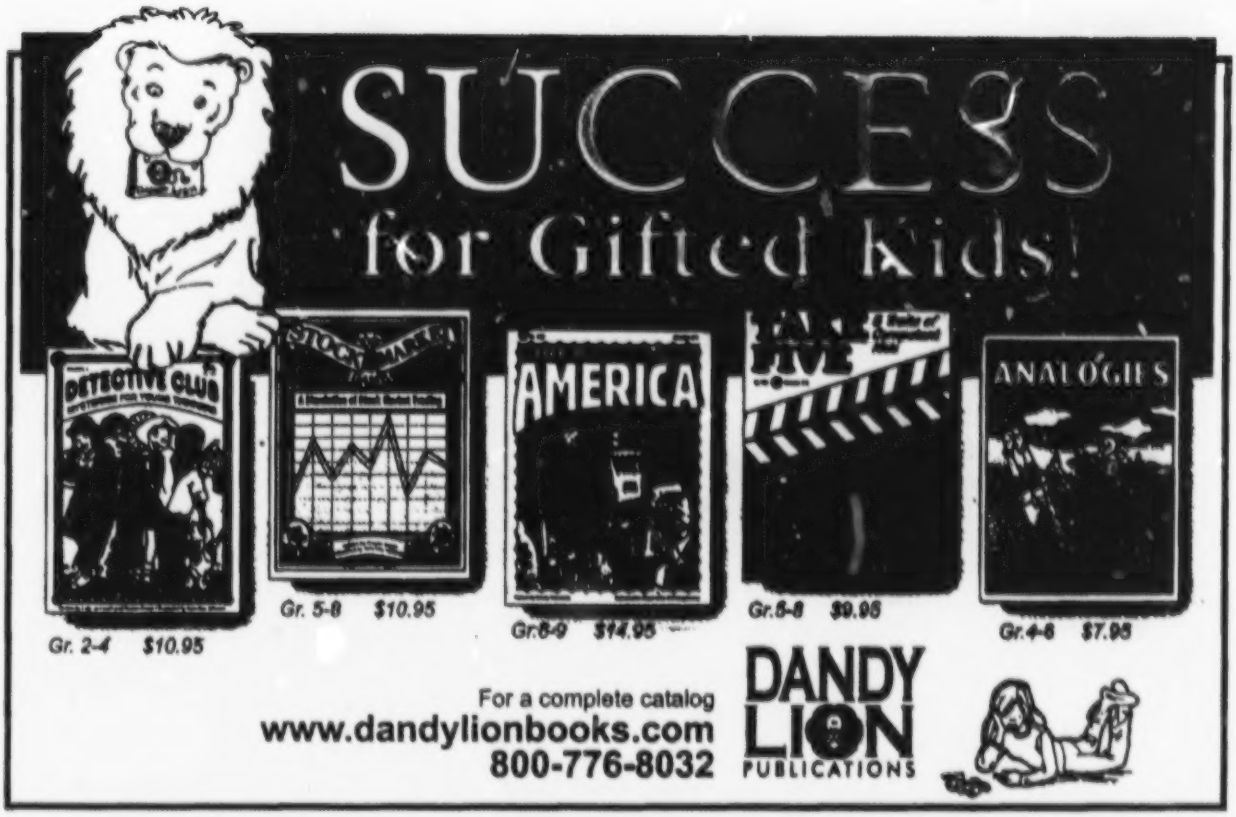

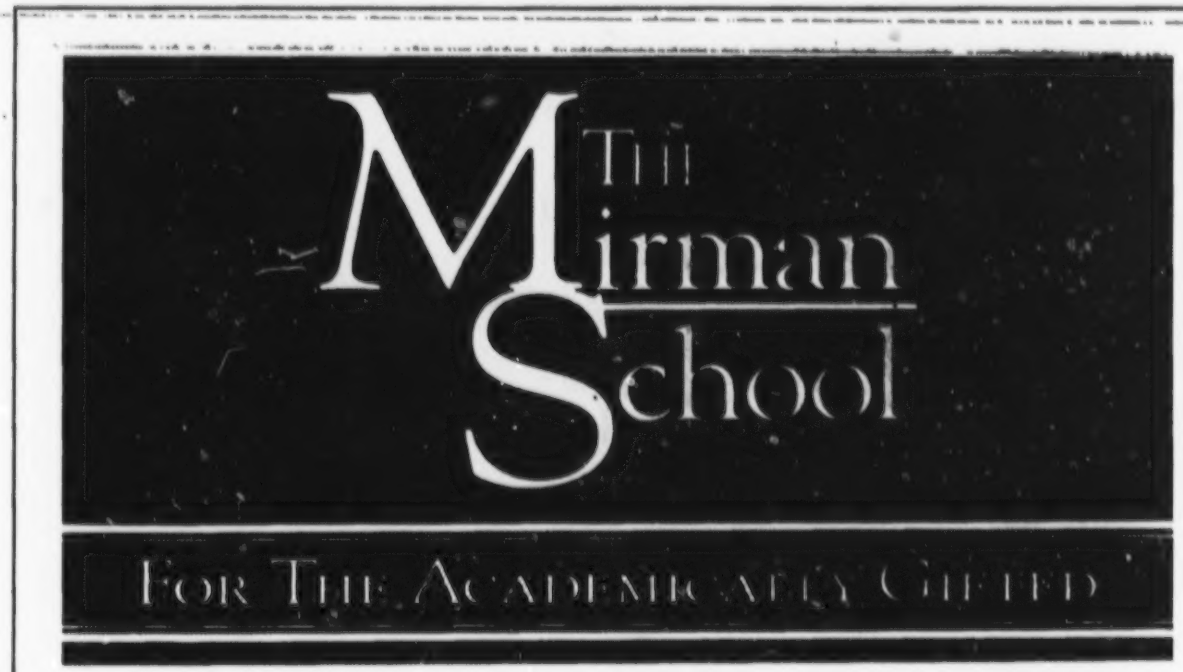

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Equity in Gifted Programs: How Do We Measure Up?

BY ELINOR RUTH SMITH

Equity in gifted programs is more than identifying numbers—program quality, retention of students in programs, and student outcomes are also important

Concerns about equity in gifted programs have been raised periodically since the inception of the programs. Like so many issues in education that arise repeatedly over the years, continued discussions of how to achieve both equity and excellence in gifted education serve as a reminder of our scant progress. Our advances, often hesitant, move us unsteadily toward rather ill-defined goals. Some key factors in our society, our schools, and perhaps in ourselves seem to stand in the way of understanding and dealing with the underlying causes of inequity as we strive to shape programs of the highest quality. What are these factors and what challenges do they pose? What changes can we make to minimize their impact? These are some of the questions I ask as I work and speak with educators, parents, and students in various school districts—questions not too different from those that were asked twenty or thirty years ago.

Addressing inequities in our gifted programs by focusing solely on numbers and on finding the "right" tests sometimes yields improvement in the numbers of students from underrepresented groups. Yet, unless we attend to questions of retention of the students in the programs and how to develop

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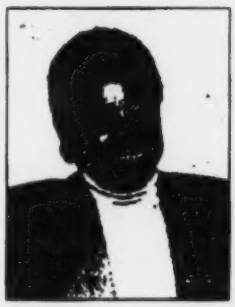
appropriate program services for them, we are likely to have only temporary results. Desire for immediate results can also lead to the use of indefensible strategies that, in the end, do more harm than good. Inequity in gifted programs has deep roots in the culture of our society and our school systems, as well as in the ways these affect all of us. Willingness to examine these might allow us to come to some longer-lasting, more defensible solutions if, indeed, we truly want solutions.

Societal Factors

It is impossible to deny the stigma attached over centuries to certain ethnic groups in American society. Prejudices against these groups—Native American, Hispanic, and African American—still do exist and it is no surprise that they are the groups most overlooked for gifted and other school programs associated with excellence. Though many efforts over time have successfully eradicated some overt forms of discrimination, it is difficult to get rid of all traces of stigma that has for so long seeped under the skin into our very bone. Like True Son in Conrad Richter's *The Light in the Forest* who, perplexed by having to leave his Indian family, wondered if his father had left some tiny trace of white blood in his veins, some of us wonder about the little traces of stigma left under our skin; others are unaware that's even possible. This affects us all.

Culture and society change in many ways. Families today represent an increasingly greater variety of cultures and lifestyles and have widely differing beliefs about and expectations of school and, similarly, of gifted programs. This presents additional challenges for schools and teachers. In areas in which children come from many different language, cultural, and socioeconomic groups, schools and school staffs are called upon to develop greater cultural competence in order to recognize the varied expressions of gifted behaviors and to understand how to serve these children well. We must be willing to give careful consideration to the need to continually revamp our identification and program strategies to accommodate these changes.

School children themselves present varied and ever-changing challenges for school staffs. Changes in the students as a result of societal influences seem to be occurring in much more rapid cycles. At the same time that children are exposed through media and technology to a whole world of ideas and images, both positive and negative, and spend hours alone within the confines of home, many children's opportunities for self-directed experiences outside the home are limited. This is a paradox. Teachers can no longer assume a commonality of prior experiences among students. Effective curriculum planning and instruction require more frequent assessment, both formal and informal, with greater attention to outcomes for individual students.



"Teachers can no longer assume a commonality of prior experiences among students."

School Factors

School systems, whether K-12 or postsecondary, though seemingly dynamic institutions, are hierarchical and accomplish change with great difficulty. They are full of contradictions. Decision-making about educational issues is not always in the hands of the educators. In the hierarchy of concerns, those who ought to be the top priority are often not. The amount of money a program draws, rather than the importance of the needs it serves, often determines how much serious attention it receives. In some areas, the gifted program becomes an added responsibility for an already overburdened administrator who may understand little about gifted education. Added to that, frequent changes of personnel with no requirements for prior knowledge, particularly at the administrative level, are common occurrences causing us to lose ground each time rather than make continuous, steady progress. Long-range planning and grooming of future leaders can alleviate some of this.

Public pressure and heightened expectations about what students should know and be able to do at each grade level are placing increasing demands on schools to better educate students, especially in our low performing schools. Many of these schools serve children of poverty and children from cultural and language groups underrepresented in gifted programs. Accountability is the word of the day. A number of schools and school systems react to this pressure by instituting rigid, top-down, one-size-fits-all programs aimed at rescuing failing students. Some of these instructional approaches are highly scripted, allowing for no variance to meet individual needs for differentiation or for the kinds of student activity through which gifted behaviors become evident. Children who need to learn in a different way are overlooked. Sometimes these approaches tend to penalize the very children we are trying to help.

The current teacher shortage is another factor which impacts most heavily those schools in low socioeconomic areas and diverse communities. These schools, the most difficult in which to teach, have the greatest turnover and, therefore, high percentages of inexperienced teachers. Once trained and more confident, a number of these new teachers opt to transfer to schools in which teaching is less demanding. Instability of staff coupled with greater challenges to meet can make it unlikely that there will be a strong focus on gifted education. Instituting and maintaining gifted programs in these schools is problematic unless they have dynamic leadership committed to serving the needs of all children, including the gifted. Too often the programs are devalued or watered down in the name of equity and fairness and the underrepresented become the most underserved.

Few teacher-training institutions are preparing new teachers for diverse and differentiated classrooms. The range of instructional needs in many classrooms taxes the abilities of even the most experienced teachers. Nor are most schools willing to face the difficulty by adjusting the range from class to class in order to better serve all students and use teachers' talents in more effective ways.

As far as understanding cultural diversity is concerned, we seem to know most about the superficial aspects of the varied cultures we encounter, such as, food, dress, important people in the culture, and important holidays; most of us understand little about what is deeply meaningful to people of those cul-

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tures and what they believe defines them. Many educators are unaware of how and when their own values are clouding their perceptions of the children they must educate. Lack of awareness can cause the best of intentions to miss the mark.

The prevailing view among those who have had little experience with gifted children and little or no training in gifted education is that high achievement in school is synonymous with giftedness. This misconception can lead to poor practices with respect to identification procedures, program options, and classroom approaches. In such cases underachieving gifted students in need of differentiated curriculum and instruction will not receive these services, thus compounding their risk for disengagement from school and for continued failure.

Do's and Don'ts

The above are a few of the factors which play a role in our inability to make greater strides and more lasting changes in properly identifying and educating gifted children from diverse, underrepresented populations. How might we change what we do and how we do it to accommodate or minimize any negative impacts of these factors? Based on what I have seen a few schools doing successfully, here are some suggested do's and don'ts for those working with gifted programs.

The Don'ts

- Don't ask people to perform tasks or services for which they are ill prepared. If classroom teachers are not routinely provided with training in how to recognize gifted abilities in diverse populations, they should not be the main source of referrals for screening and assessment. Similarly, don't place gifted children from underrepresented cultural groups with teachers who have neither the instinct nor the training nor the cultural competence for working with them.
- Don't expect one kind of program or one program option to meet the needs of all gifted students. Even without considering cultural diversity, gifted students are a diverse group with respect to ability levels, areas of strength, interests, learning styles, social and emotional needs, and personality characteristics. For gifted students from diverse backgrounds, successful outcomes, including retention in the program, are more likely if a variety of program options can be combined to meet their needs.
- Don't expect gifted students from diverse backgrounds and their families to share your values about school and the role of education in their lives. Survival needs, loyalty to family, and cultural tradition may take priority over education for some families. Acknowledging the family's values may be the first step to building a relationship of mutual respect. Respect can be the basis for allowing students to make their own decisions at the appropriate time concerning whether to live in one or the other culture, straddle the two, or become bicultural.
- Don't place gifted students from underrepresented cultures in a visual and performing arts option just as a way of quickly increasing their numbers in the program. Legitimate placement of students in visual and performing arts programs is appropriate, but not as a means of avoiding the effort of devising a defensible screening and identification process for all aspects of the program, including the intellectual area.
- Don't focus on identification numbers to the exclusion of program issues. Quality of program, how well the program suits students' needs, retention in the program of those identified, and student outcomes are important. Without these, identification serves no valid purpose.
- Don't wait until upper elementary grades to identify and serve gifted students. Students from diverse cultural and linguistic groups may disengage from school early without the appropriate curriculum and instruction.
- Don't be smug about your or your school's level of cultural competence. Becoming culturally competent requires ongoing self-examination. Refusing to self-examine leaves hidden vestiges of prejudice and stigma deep in one's bones. Subtle forms of prejudice, such as expecting less of children from certain groups in the name of giving them experiences of success that will make them feel good, can be more harmful than overt ones, for they leave children powerless to fight back. Unless we make this effort, all our other accomplishments will be undermined. We are all works in progress.

"Don't expect gifted students from diverse backgrounds and their families to share your values about school and the role of education in their lives."

The Do's

- Do make sure that students have equal opportunity to be screened. Opportunity to be screened should not be dependent on age of the student, school attended, classroom placement, socioeconomic level, or cultural or linguistic group. Monitor for equal access on an ongoing basis.
- Do begin identification and program services at the earliest levels. Because children form their view of themselves in relation to school and learning at an early age, gifted students who are at risk are in danger of forming a negative view which they may carry with them throughout their school experiences.
- Do use multiple measures for identifi-

cation, including both test and non-test data. At no time in the identification process should one test or measure be the determining factor. In addition to test scores, data collected should include information from parents, the students themselves, and teachers. Other evidence of exceptionality might be anecdotal information and student work samples, as well as information on environmental or personal conditions that might inhibit school performance or depress test scores. All information should be considered together, rather than any one piece of evidence alone determining the outcome of the assessment.

- Do have the data gathered reviewed by a committee or study team composed of trained staff. A team of people working toward cultural competence, who understand giftedness, and who are able to interpret the data should make the recommendations about identification, placement, and appropriate options for program services.
- Do develop a variety of options for program services to meet varying student needs. Traditional program options may not be appropriate for some students. There are those who need a combination of services such as multi-age grouping, cluster class placement, mentoring, or interdisciplinary seminars, to name a few. Decisions about these should be made based on student assessment data. Be creative.
- Do seek out parents and community members of diverse backgrounds to participate in some aspects of the program, such as as members of advisory groups or in parent education or other activities. Students from underrepresented groups may be hesitant about participating in the gifted program, especially if they see few students like themselves participating. They may have difficulty explaining the program to the peer group from whom they have been separated. Seeing members of their own community involved may increase the chances that they will stay. Invitations by mail may not be enough to get the participation you want. Personal contact may be necessary.
- Do provide ongoing staff development followed by on-site support as programs are implemented. Staff development, whether on instructional practices or recognizing giftedness, requires supportive follow-up in the implementation stages to be effective and have lasting results. Thorough in-depth training over time of small numbers of committed staff from varied sites so that they can become trainers and mentors to others seems to work well. Remember, though, that the trainers themselves need periodic opportunities to come together for support and to further their own learning.
- Do long-range planning that addresses all aspects of the program, paying attention to and prioritizing the trouble spots and how all the pieces of the puzzle fit together. Fragmentation of the program detracts from the success of the whole, particularly for underrepresented students. If those with responsibility for identification, for example, are unfamiliar with curricular and instructional practices in varied program options, retention of students in the program can be seriously damaged, particularly if inappropriate placement decisions have been made. Similarly, those responsible for the instruction need to know the kinds and results of assessment that were done so that instruction can be more targeted and effective for individual students.
- Do consider piloting new program options, identification procedures, and staff development approaches on a small scale before implementing them universally. If piloting is done with volunteer schools and staffs, the cooperative process can help determine what works, what doesn't, and what needs to be altered. It can also help determine whether the approaches are cost effective. Feedback from the users can be extremely valuable to successful use on a wider basis at a later date. When pilot projects are successful, they have the potential to generate positive interest for the next phase of implementation.
- Do build evaluation into all aspects of identification and programming. A particular approach may look good on paper and feel right to those involved. Only by carefully planned evaluation strategies will you be able to identify the intended outcomes and know whether and when they are achieved. As mentioned above, some school districts focus so much on the numbers of students from diverse backgrounds being identified that they forget to look at whether the students are remaining in the program and whether the program is helping them achieve the expected results.

These are a few ideas gleaned from working with gifted programs in a variety of schools and school districts The list is not finite. You can probably add to it. These do's and don'ts can be separated into those which are simply good program practices, those which are just common sense, those which require changes in the ways we and our schools succumb to societal influences, and those which require fundamental changes in our own attitudes and behaviors. The latter are the difficult ones. They require determination, resolve, and persistence. Do we have the will power or will we be writing articles addressing this issue again in another ten or fifteen years? ■

ELINOR RUTH SMITH is a freelance consultant specializing in the education of gifted students. In addition to consulting for schools and school districts, she is also an instructor for the GATE Certificate Programs of the University of California at both the San Diego and Riverside campuses.

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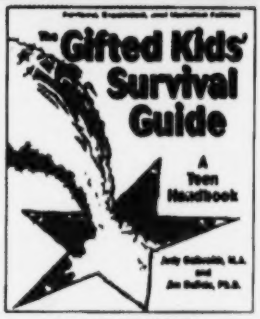

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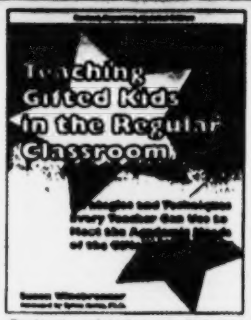

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DISCOVER

Changing the Way We Think About Education

BY C. JUNE MAKER AND ROBERT A. LANE

The DISCOVER Projects (Discovering Intellectual Strengths and Capabilities while Observing Varied Ethnic Responses) began in 1987 under the direction of C. June Maker at the University of Arizona. At the time, Dr. Maker had been analyzing various new theories of intelligence, the most notable of which was Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences. She also had been studying groups of gifted children, as well as successful scientists who had overcome disabilities, to isolate factors contributing to exceptional success. She eventually determined the most important component of exceptional success was the superior ability to solve complex problems. The DISCOVER Projects were created to study, categorize, and measure a broad spectrum of "problem-solving strategies" used by various age groups of differing ethnic, economic, and cultural backgrounds.

Dr. Maker and staff soon realized that even though patterns of problem-solving ability emerged, individual strategies differed substantially according to the *category* of problems presented. It became obvious that there were very few "generic" problem-solving skills. Instead, an individual might solve certain types of problems in a superior way, yet be average or below average with others. This observation fit perfectly with Gardner's theory and other theories suggesting that we all have more than one type of intelligence, and the DISCOVER staff began categorizing problem-solving strategies according to identified intelligences (then seven). Eventually Maker's research not only verified many aspects of multiple intelligences theory but also showed overwhelming evidence that different intelligences can be effectively assessed by observing how many and which problem-solving strategies an individual uses. A fascinating two-way relationship appeared—the level of any given intelligence possessed by an individual can be assessed by observing problem-solving skills and conversely, problem-solving skills and overall learning capacity can be improved by learning "through" or "by applying" one's strongest intelligences.

The DISCOVER Assessment, developed by observing thousands of children, can be used with children ages three and up, as well as with adults

As an example of how problem solving relates to different intelligences, consider the following problem: a heavy rock needs to be moved to the top of a hill. A person with a high degree of Linguistic Intelligence may employ strategies such as asking other people what ideas they have, or may find it helpful to organize a plan of action by first writing out thoughts. A person with high Spatial Intelligence may approach the problem by drawing a diagram of the various components needed to do the job, or by making a physical model of the process. A person with a dominant Musical Intelli-

"The implementation of DISCOVER in a school setting tends to level the playing field for "at risk" children and children from diverse cultural backgrounds...not by changing or lowering standards but by more accurate and flexible assessment and teaching methodologies."

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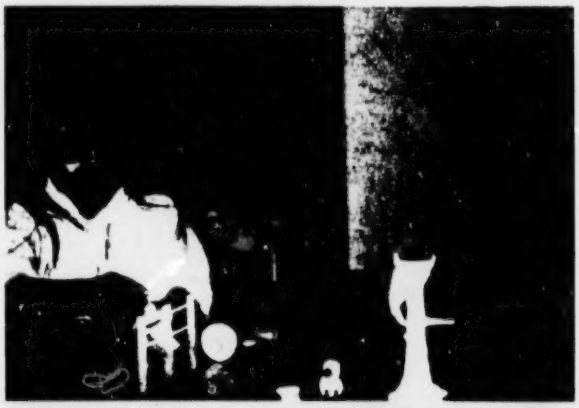
gence, or related artistic abilities, might not care whether the rock gets moved at all but might become excited about contributing to strategies that move the rock in a "novel" "showy" or otherwise "interesting" way and likely will be more concerned about aesthetics and elegance of the project, rather than cost or practicality. On the other hand, a person with higher Logical-Mathematical Intelligence may first want to know why the rock has to be moved to the top of the hill in the first place and is there an alternative—or if not, how much does it weigh and what resources are available, or would it be more efficient to make the hill smaller first! Of course, such extreme reliance on only one intelligence is rare. An individual is a complex combination of all the intelligences, in various degrees.

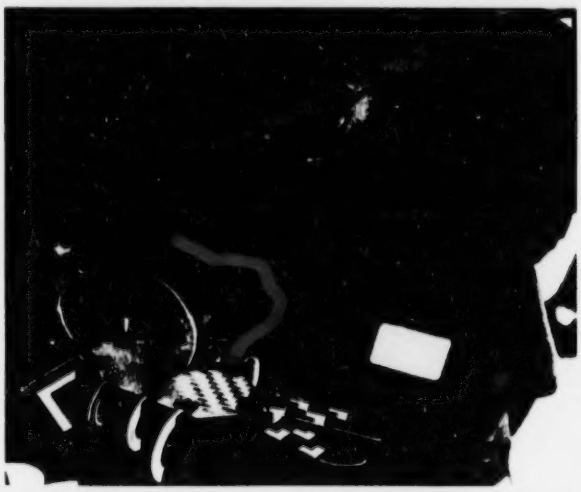


The DISCOVER Assessment is used extensively to identify gifted students in Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, since much of the research and development has included Native American students.

After thousands of children were observed, 119 effective problem-solving strategies were recorded and organized into a performance-based assessment instrument now known as the DISCOVER Assessment. Observers rate the level of different intelligences possessed by an individual based on their problem-solving skills in that area. The assessment can be used, in its numerous forms, with children ages three and up, as well as with adults. The assessment's effectiveness has attracted considerable attention, especially as an alternative to traditional assessment methods for identifying gifted students and as an "ethnically and linguistically fair" assessment of abilities. Today the DISCOVER Assessment is used in many states and several countries, despite its continued evolution as a research project.

But simply assessing children's intelligences and their use of effective problem-solving strategies was not enough. Teachers needed curriculum ideas that would take advantage of the assessment results.

DISCOVER researchers began looking at connections between three components—problem solving, multiple intelligences, and learning ability. They determined that each of us approaches all problems primarily through the filter of our dominant intelligences; we learn best by first applying natural areas of strength. This fact alone suggested that children sitting quietly behind a desk listening to an instructor may not be the best model for learning and, in some cases, actually may be detrimental. For example, high-energy children with high Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence are often misdiagnosed as having Attention Deficit Disorder and given drugs to calm them down when exactly the opposite should occur. These children learn best (and very effectively) by moving their bodies in the learning process—for them, lack of movement actually retards learning!



"Central to any new DISCOVER Curriculum is that students use their dominant intelligences to stimulate learning in all subjects, especially weaker ones."

The scope of the DISCOVER research grants at that time was not large enough to develop full-scale, multiple intelligences-based curricula for all grade levels. So researchers opted instead to design experimental curriculum models in the form of guidelines for schools or individual teachers, demonstrating how they could reshape their existing curricula. As a result, each school using the models developed its own "version" or prototype of a DISCOVER Curriculum. There were many variations and, of course, some were more effective than others. Part of future curriculum development efforts will be to collect and analyze these examples for good ideas that can be incorporated into a full DISCOVER Curriculum.

The key idea of the curriculum models (and central to any new DISCOVER Curriculum) is that students use their dominant intelligences to stimulate learning in all subjects, especially weaker ones. After a child is assessed and a profile developed to show his or her combination of strengths, the learning experience can be customized, allowing the student to learn weaker subjects by using the familiarity and comfort of natural strengths. For example, a child with low oral and written linguistic skills will not learn math effectively by listening to lectures or reading a textbook, but may catch on quickly when the concepts are presented in another way. Consider the high-energy child example above. This child might have difficulty concentrating during a traditional addition/subtraction lesson but will understand the concepts quickly and permanently if allowed to walk or jump forward and backward the proper number of spaces along a number line on the floor. Probably this child will learn the alphabet more quickly by forming the shape of the letters with his or her entire body. On the other hand, a child with high musical intelligence will learn letters best by singing the "ABC" song, whereas high Spatial Intelligence children might respond best to letters that are three-dimensional, colorful, and graphically detailed, or to making letters in a tray of sand.

Classrooms using DISCOVER Curriculum models may look similar to traditional classrooms but actually are designed to teach

the same lesson many different ways at the same time. All children in the class eventually learn the same core subject matters, but by using methods of their own choosing, as guided by their teacher(s). As a bonus, this teaching method not only improves learning but also increases students' task engagement, resulting in fewer discipline problems.

Diversity, an Important Goal and Result of DISCOVER

The DISCOVER Projects are built upon numerous forms of diversity, including cultural, linguistic, ethnic, geographic, and age, as well as different intelligences, philosophies of teaching, and methods of learning. For example, the problem-solving strategies that form the checklist used with the DISCOVER Assessment were derived from observing problem solving in various cultures and languages, with young and old participants, and with individuals possessing a wide variety of backgrounds and skills. Likewise, the DISCOVER curriculum models incorporate materials and methods appropriate to the populations being served.

As a result, the assessment and curriculum models are adaptable and are designed to be accurate with a broad spectrum of groups, even when that broad spectrum exists within a single school or classroom. Schools around the world are struggling with the fact that there simply is no "one-size-fits-all" strategy for teaching. Educators are looking for ways to more effectively teach students, with consideration of a range of different backgrounds, language skills, and learning abilities. The DISCOVER Projects were designed specifically to address this issue.

The goal is to find the innate abilities of each child (or adult), regardless of potentially diverse external factors, and develop these abilities in appropriate ways. This does not mean a lowering of standards. But it does perhaps mean arriving at the standards in different ways, taking advantage of diversity and helping each individual achieve success by using his or her strengths.

Results

The implementation of DISCOVER in a school setting tends to level the playing field for "at risk" children and children from diverse cultural backgrounds—again not by changing or lowering standards but by more accurate and flexible assessment and teaching methodologies. We find frequently that schools with mixed ethnic populations tend to have an inordinately high percentage of Caucasian students in programs for the gifted and a disproportionate number of culturally and linguistically diverse students in programs for children with disabilities, primarily because of antiquated assessment instruments or placement practices. These percentages usually change considerably after implementation of DISCOVER, more closely reflecting actual school demographics. There is no quota or predefined strategy to achieve these results. Such balancing occurs naturally.

Not surprisingly, these results have prompted considerable attention from the Office of Civil Rights and school districts recognizing the need to serve their student populations more fairly. The DISCOVER Assessment is used extensively to identify gifted students in Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, since much of the research and development has included Native American students. DISCOVER is perhaps the only instrument designed and used first with Native children.

Data from numerous pilot projects and implementation experiments show the DISCOVER Assessment and Curriculum Models, used together, do increase test scores and overall academic performance. At the same time, they increase creativity and critical thinking. Of course, significant change often takes years because of the difficulty of changing attitudes and methodologies. But the eventual results well justify the efforts. In Tucson, Arizona, Maker's staff worked with one particular school for seven years, along-side other like-minded organizations and projects (in a school reform effort), and saw the students' average standardized test scores rise from a percentile in the low 20s the first three years, up to the mid 60s in the seventh year. Currently DISCOVER staff are analyzing results of a multi-year project on a much larger scale, where an entire district in St. Paul, Minnesota uses the DISCOVER Assessment with 4,000 children every year.

Present activities include preparations for a significant new stage of developmental research that will integrate more technology into the assessment process, create a much more extensive series of Strength Profiles and produce national standards-based curricula for all grade levels. See the DISCOVER web site at **www.discover.arizona.edu** or call 520-622-8106 for more details about past and future projects.

Although DISCOVER methodologies often are used to identify and serve gifted students, we believe *all* students can, and should, benefit from these ideas and from educational programs customized to their individual abilities. While maintaining strong support for academic excellence, we are committed to seeing all children assessed accurately, regardless of external factors or barriers. We also want to make sure their innate abilities, once recognized, are expanded and challenged in ways that will help them not just pass the next exam, but be more successful in life. Our nation currently is struggling in a national debate about how to best prepare students for the new century. We think DISCOVER will play a key role, by offering exciting, research-based alternatives to the relics of past thinking that are holding our students back. Our ultimate goal is to spark creativity and engagement in the learning process, helping transform what might otherwise be a necessary chore into a life-long thirst for growth and knowledge. ■

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ROBERT A. LANE is a businessman with a science background, in charge of design and development for the DISCOVER Projects. He focuses on incorporating new technology into existing DISCOVER instruments and future expansion of the projects, nationally and internationally.

ILLUSTRATION BY JON PEARSON

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OPEN GATE

San Diego Supports Highly Gifted, Low-income Students

BY MARJORIE FOX

A well-educated population is our country's greatest asset. And diversity is our greatest strength. A critical element of those factors is that highly gifted, low-income children tend disproportionately to miss appropriate educational opportunities. That situation is being addressed in San Diego, California through the OPEN GATE program.

The OPEN GATE program provides educational opportunities for children with very high potential and limited economic means. OPEN GATE was initiated in February 1998 through a partnership between the San Diego City Schools Gifted And Talented Education (GATE) Seminar program for highly gifted children and the Human Development Foundation (HDF).

The GATE Seminar program is designed for students who need extraordinarily high-level, advanced, and challenging curricular activities; those with extremely high ability according to tests but low school achievement; and those who are divergent thinkers. The GATE Seminar program provides highly gifted students with daily self-contained, 20-to-1 student/teacher ratio classes, whereas the regular GATE program serves gifted students in classes of 35 children.

GATE Seminar was established when the San Diego City Schools District found that a high and disproportionate percentage of extremely able students were subject to:

- high dropout rates
- high suicide rates
- behavioral problems in the classroom

Highly gifted, low-income children, if left without the appropriate level of education, are especially vulnerable to the negative influences of low-income neighborhood environments. Without positive educational challenges, their leadership potential can be turned toward negative activities. The intention of OPEN GATE is to align these promising young students with the resources they need to nurture their gifts, support their education, and promote their leadership potential in a positive direction.

"The most valued resource for OPEN GATE students are their tutors who provide the necessary encouragement and positive motivation essential for academic success."

Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of the OPEN GATE program is to provide all eligible students with the resources necessary to achieve their potentials. This goal is met through the following objectives.

Objective #1: Increase students' standardized achievement scores to the 80th and 90th percentiles in three years.

Most students entering OPEN GATE in third grade are second language students with below average reading scores on their standardized achievement test (SAT 9). At the end of the second year, OPEN GATE students' reading scores averaged at the 81st percentile; their math scores averaged at the 94th percentile.

Objective #2: Assist parents to become active participants in their children's education.

Parents are required to meet these minimum requirements:

- transporting children to a school that has a Seminar/OPEN GATE class, or allowing them to ride school busses
- attendance at all parent student conferences
- participation in classroom activities (e.g. serving as translators to Spanish and Vietnamese speaking families; making costumes for school plays; helping to repair classrooms; serving as chaperones on field trips; assisting with the parent English as Second Language (ESL) class; serving on school councils)

Objective #3: Make systemic changes necessary to include all qualified students.

The school board has committed to add one classroom per site each year for three years to maintain a consistent population of 60 new students per year. Locating these classrooms at magnet schools will help resolve the transportation issue for the entire low-income, highly gifted child population in the OPEN GATE program. The school board has also agreed to provide express school bussing to these classrooms.

Criteria for Enrollment

In order to enroll in a San Diego City Schools GATE Seminar classroom and the OPEN GATE program in the third grade, students must meet the following criteria:

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- family income which qualifies students for the federal free or reduced lunch program
- a score of 99.6% or better on the Raven Progressive Matrices Test
- parents willing to participate actively in their children's education

The OPEN GATE program supports relatively large numbers of minority populations that reflect San Diego's diverse population. Students often come from immigrant or refugee families; most are second language learners and represent a broad spectrum of ethnic backgrounds. They are enrolled in grades 3–5, in preparation for success in middle school and beyond.

The Raven Progressive Matrices Test is administered to second graders by the San Diego City Schools GATE Department psychologists in order to identify GATE qualified students. The Raven is a nonverbal test comprised of patterns and puzzles designed to determine the level of native intelligence without relying on verbal skills, native languages, or cultural backgrounds. Those who score at the 99.9 percentile or higher qualify for the GATE Seminar program. Students scoring at the 99.6 percentile or higher with additional economic or social factors also qualify.

For its part, OPEN GATE provides the following resources:

- tutoring in English language skills and study habits
- the cost of transportation to school or school bus transportation
- the cost of transportation for parents to participate in class activities
- funds for school supplies and field trips
- independent testing and assessments

OPEN GATE Student Assessments

Academic assessments are conducted when each student enters the program. The results are made available to the appropriate teacher. The assessment includes five academic instruments to rate student's literacy skills including:

- Qualitative Developmental Spelling Inventory
- Developmental Reading Assessment
- **Five-Minute Writing Sample**
- **San Diego Quick** (informal reading assessment)
- Peabody Picture Vocabulary

These assessments are reviewed with the student's classroom teacher to determine the focus for each student's tutoring sessions. This information is then conveyed to the tutor.

Collaboration

Community collaboration is essential in order to serve low-income populations. Administration of the OPEN GATE program is conducted primarily by the Human Development Foundation, a nonprofit 501 (c) 3 organization.

The primary collaborator in this project is the San Diego City Schools GATE Department and the school board. The school board has approved district funding for HDF's proposal to place one new classroom building per year for three years, at an inner city magnet school. Each new classroom will accommodate 20 new students each year, leading to a consistent population of 60 students at the school site.

The most valued resource for OPEN GATE students are their tutors who provide the necessary encouragement and positive motivation essential for academic success. Each year, students are matched with college student tutors by family language, gender, and location.

San Diego State University (SDSU), Department of Special Education is also a major collaborator in the OPEN GATE program. The Department recruits students working toward their teaching credentials to become OPEN GATE paid tutors. In addition, a tutor training program has been designed and implemented by Associate Dean Margie Kitano and her team. The training emphasizes teaching English language skills to highly gifted, second language learners.

These college student tutors serve as role models for the children to pursue higher education, and to bridge the communication gap between schools and their families. Most family members speak little English and have little or no formal education, and tutors often serve as translators for teachers and families.

Dedicated Seminar teachers are essential to student success in the program. They also ensure that the appropriate resources reach individual students. Without the extraordinary efforts of these teachers, OPEN GATE would not be possible. The Seminar teachers also provide professional guidance and mentoring to the tutors who are developing their careers in education.

The OPEN GATE program was developed under the direction of Barbara Moore-Schuch, GATE program manager, prior to her retirement. Dr Schuch has since joined the Human Development Foundation's Board of Directors.

Additional collaborators include the following:

- San Diego Public Library has agreed to purchase the necessary books for an accelerated reading comprehension program
- Mentor San Diego provides mentor-training for tutors
- UCSD PAL program and the Bishop's School provide a summer academic and leadership program
- Joy of Sports provides an after-school tennis and life skills program
- SDSU Literacy Center provides additional academic assessments and tutoring
- SDSU and UCSD work study programs assist in recruiting tutors

Finally, collaboration for funding includes the State of California, Secretary of Education's office, Community Development Block Grant, The Sandra Brue Foundation, Polito & Muscio, Inc., Mission Federal Credit Union, the Galinson Family Foundation, Price-Galinson Collaborative Fund, The Purkayastha Family Foundation, The Robins Family Foundation, Simon & Elsie Winer Foundation, the Samuel and Katherine French Fund, (SAIC), The Susan Scott Foundation, The San Diego Foundation, Irene & George Kassens Discretionary Fund, San Diego National Bank, the Leon Strauss Foundation, and several individual donors.

Program Challenges

Communication with parents is one of the program's greatest challenges and it is crucial to each student's progress. Therefore, translation is a key element of the program's success. Program brochures and documents are translated into four different languages: Spanish, Cambodian, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. Translators are available at parent meetings.

Historically, many qualified students from low-income families did not enroll in Seminar classrooms for the following reasons:

- safety concerns for young children taking public transportation by themselves
- parents without personal transportation to attend school activities
- frequent changes in parent work schedules

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- siblings attending other schools
- parents unaware of the educational advantages available to their children

Of these, transportation is the primary barrier keeping qualified, low-income children from enrolling in the program since their families are concentrated in those areas of the city where there are fewer Seminar classrooms.

Addressing the family's social needs is often required for a child's academic success. One family on the verge of homelessness was assisted by OPEN GATE in moving to an apartment near a school with a Seminar classroom. The student's English language skills were far below average, but as a result of his new learning environment, he became a grand prize winner of a city wide public library essay contest, and was honored by the mayor and the city council; he also presented his prize winning essay to the Governor's office in Sacramento. His mother was encouraged by her son's success as well; as a single parent she didn't drive and spoke very little English. Now, she stands at the top of her class in a parent ESL program at her son's school.

Conclusion

The program has doubled in size each year. Presently, 180 (60 at each site) low-income students are participating in OPEN GATE. In addition 10 students have been promoted to middle school; all had been below average in reading upon entering the program. Students averaged in the 80th percentiles in reading scores and 90th percentiles in math scores when completing grade five. OPEN GATE has provided these young students the opportunity to excel in Seminar classes they would not otherwise have attended. Already some have received academic scholarships; some are attending the Preuss School at UCSD. None of the children would have been enrolled in GATE Seminar classes without the resources and advocacy provided by OPEN GATE.

With these measures of success the San Diego City Schools and the Human Development Foundation, through OPEN GATE, are concretely addressing current business and social challenges in San Diego. Because of San Diego's unique circumstances and rich multicultural heritage, the OPEN GATE program is poised to be a leader of similar developments across California and the country. ■

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A Practical, 3-Step Screening Strategy for Finding More Underrepresented Population Gifted Students

BY SAUNDRA SCOTT SPARLING

With a little tweaking, teachers' lesson planning and daily roll book record-keeping can become tools to uncover patterns of potential giftedness and intellectual talent in students. It is especially useful when seeking more students currently underrepresented in gifted programs (e.g. Spanish speakers, students of color, children of poverty, and children with special needs). Three steps are involved.

In each core subject area and across at least a six-month period, offer several lessons that allow students to perform in an open-ended response format specifically related to district gifted screening criteria. Open-ended is defined here in two ways: Allowing for multiple strategies to generate a given correct response and allowing multiple correct or creative responses for the same question or problem. For example, one criteria used by the Los Angeles Unified School District Gifted and Highly Able Magnet requires that students demonstrate four types of thinking and problem-solving skills. Among these is, "Use alternative methods in approaching new or unfamiliar mathematical problems." To apply the screening strategy, plan several lessons across the school year in which students can be observed generating alternative mathematical problem-solving methods.

When recording students' scores for each lesson, circle or highlight performance outliers—scores far above the basic score range for the class. (See figure. 1)

Figure 1. Sample Roll Book Marking

	Non-Routine Math Problems: Alternative Problem-solving Methods					
Student	L1-9/25	L2- 10/20	L3-11/15	L4-1/25	L 5-2/20	L6-3/20
1	2	1	1	3	1	2
2	10	11	10	15	14	12
3	19	16	20	22	15	20
4	7	10	12	9	7	8
5	5	8	7	5	8	8
6	14	13	15	14	16	15

L = Lesson

Over the six-month period, look for the patterns of high ability that emerge. (Note student #3 in Figure 1.) Patterns of unusually low performance can also be identified. (Note student #1 in Figure 1.)

By using this procedure, teachers can build a body of solid evidence upon which to base gifted referrals—evidence that can uncover high performance abilities in often overlooked students.

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Recruiting Teachers for Bilingual Gifted and Talented Programs

BY ERNESTO BERNAL

From Jaime A. Castellano, Eva I. Diaz, Eds., Reaching New Horizons: Gifted and Talented Education for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students, *(2002) by Allyn & Bacon. Reprinted by permission. Ch. 12, Recruiting Teachers for Bilingual Gifted and Talented Programs, by Ernest M. Bernal, pp. 237-249, excepting material appearing on pp. 243-246. (See book review on p. 58)*

It has long been established that students from nondominant ethnic groups are generally underrepresented in educational programs for the gifted and talented (GT) (O'Connell-Ross, 1993), and that language-minority students are especially underidentified (Bermudez & Rakow, 1993). The matter of general underrepresentation has received considerable attention over the past thirty years or so, and some progress in ethnic equity has been noted (Bernal, 1997b), especially in California and Texas, states that give some latitude to school districts in specifying the tests and steps used to nominate and identify children for GT programs.

One reason why the number of language-minority students in GT programs remains so low is that most districts rely too heavily on testing in English to select or identify GT students, because school personnel frequently cannot provide for assessment, much less for accelerated instruction, in these students' first languages. The author's experience of visiting dozens of GT programs suggests that, in addition, few GT teachers know English as a Second Language (ESL) methods. (A similar situation exists in special education [Wald, 1996].) The result of this deficit in GT programs is that bright students who enter school and are less than proficient in English are selected for the GT program later than their native-English-speaking peers, even under the best of circumstances. This in turn affects the program's demographics (Bernal, 1998) and requires the bilingual GT students to "catch up," a demoralizing prospect for many students and their parents, which is made even worse if the GT program is not prepared to deal sensitively with these culturally different learners.

At present, however, the outlook for public school districts is not so bleak, especially for those that have in place strong GT and bilingual programs and a cadre of well prepared bilingual teachers. A few viable examples of bilingual GT programs exist (see, e.g., Barkan & Bernal, 1991; Gallagher, 1991; Perez & Bernal, 1996), and others are starting up. Early in 1997, a joint meeting in Washington, DC, of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (Title VII-OBEMLA) and the Javits Program (GT) of the Office of Educational Research Improvement (OERI) augured well for a new departure in federal funding opportunities for bilingual GT program development and evaluation. In 1997, for example, Javits Program funded the Region One Education Service Center in south Texas for three years to produce a bilingual GT curriculum.

There have always been a few elementary school GT programs that offered a course in a modern language for enrichment, whereby language was studied as a separate subject, but that is not what is contemplated in this book or in this chapter. Instead, what is proposed is nothing less than a GT program that offers content instruction in two languages to English-language learners (ELLs), using appropriate methodologies.

The essential element in implementing

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such a curriculum, of course, is in recruitment of highly proficient bilingual teachers who can also become good teachers of the gifted. This chapter deals exclusively with the recruitment of experienced teachers for bilingual GT programs. It does not address preservice models because there are none that are designed to certify teachers in both fields simultaneously and economically, that is, without having to "add" a complete certification program through postgraduate or graduate courses.

Approaches to the Recruitment of Bilingual Teachers for the Gifted and Talented Classroom

Despite general shortages in the number of qualified bilingual teachers (Bernal & Amabrisca,1996, Boe, 1990; Wald, 1996), experience over the years indicates that bilingual teachers can be positively recruited to serve bright ELLs in GT programs (Bernal, 1989, 1990, 1995; Perez & Bernal, 1996). Recent experiences in the Chicago Public Schools and in the El Paso, Texas, Independent School District (ISD) suggests that bilingual teachers who have been specifically prepared to teach in two-way bilingual programs can transfer their skills into a GT setting. These teachers know how to teach English-proficient learners and ELLs in each other's languages. What these teachers need to learn are the ways to accelerate and enrich the classroom setting in ways that differentiate a good gifted program from an albeit innovative but "regular" program. Anecdotal observations of this author suggest that this transition is not so difficult for effective, bilingually fluent teachers who already are on the frontiers of educational development.

The General Appeal to Service and Professional Growth

Designating certain bilingual teachers for recruitment, in the experience of the Diego City Schools (Bernal, 1995; Perez & Bernal, 1996), seems to be very effective. Selecting bilingually fluent teachers with a penchant for creativity and for promoting higher order thinking skills, teachers who also possess a willingness to take the lead from their students in order to capitalize on the "teachable moment," is in itself an important form of recognition. This, coupled with the opportunity to add a GT credential to their professional qualifications, can be a very persuasive inducement to dedicated educators.

San Diego's recruitment effort was built around six schools with the greatest percentage of Spanish-speaking ELL students. Baseline studies (Perez & Bernal, 1996) indicated that relatively few children in these schools were selected for the GT program, regardless of their proficiency in English. A Title VII (OBEMLA) grant was initially obtained, pursuant to a proposal submitted in consultation with the schools. Information was shared with the bilingual teachers, who indicated their interest and were subsequently trained to meet the district's requirements for local GT credentialing. (Details of their training are presented later in this chapter.) In addition, many of these teachers took university coursework in the area of the gifted.

In El Paso, the appeal to service seemed to be further strengthened by the obvious collaboration between the district's bilingual and GT program directors, the associate superintendent in charge of the geographic area, the articulated support of a respected school principal, and the fact that the proposal for an ethnically and linguistically integrated, bilingual GT program had been endorsed enthusiastically by the parents whose children would participate. In both San Diego and El Paso, the teachers were also trained and visited regularly by university professors and consultants who had an interest in the bilingual GT project or had a stake in the participating schools' success.

Another source of bilingual teachers that should not be overlooked is the GT program itself. Many GT programs, in the author's experience, have used native speakers of modern languages as well as highly proficient second-language speakers of these languages to enrich the GT students' curriculum by offering foreign language studies. Given the chance, some of these teachers may want to engage in teaching academic content through these media as well. These teachers, of course, could benefit from an internship in a bilingual program as well as the inservice or formal coursework necessary to secure a bilingual credential.

Financial Incentives and Scholarships for Training and Certification/Endorsement

Díaz-Rico and Smith (1994) describe a recruiting technique for bilingual teachers that includes financial support for teacher credentialing. This technique has been employed successfully to secure bilingual teachers for GT programs in California, Arizona, and Texas, in the author's experience, and the formal coursework or workshops to prepare these teachers for their enhanced roles has been paid by using local funds, the state's allocations to the districts for GT programs, and special federal grants awarded to the schools or to universities. Region One's Javits Project in Texas, for example, has sponsored five to ten teachers per year to attend graduate education courses in gifted education to obtain a GT teaching credential.

Bilingual gifted and talented programs require highly professional, creative bilingual teachers who are able to promote higher order thinking skills.

Some districts have also used local monies to pay bonuses to bilingual teachers, but in these instances, the teachers have been assigned either to compensatory or to non-GT, two-way bilingual classrooms. It remains to be seen whether such bonuses would be made available to bilingual teachers assigned to work with gifted children in a bilingual mode.

Release Time, Travel to Professional Meetings, and Other Perquisites

Release time; money to support travel to professional meetings that support the work of the bilingual GT program, where the teachers can meet other teachers to share ideas and practices; a larger budget for teaching materials and hardware/software in two languages; an extra computer for each of the classrooms; a special fund for field trips; and the like have variously been used (Díaz-Rico & Smith, 1994). Done collaboratively

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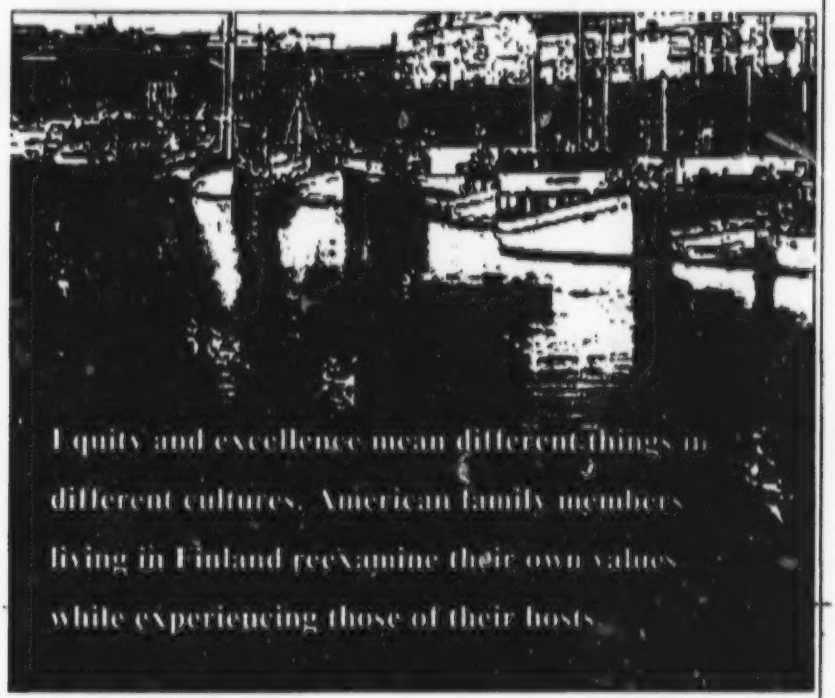
America's Dynamic Duo—Equity and Excellence

BY MARLA DOHERTY



Equity and excellence mean different things in different cultures. American family members living in Finland reexamine their own values while experiencing those of their hosts.

Deciding to broach the subject tactfully if opportunity arose, we stepped into darkness. Candlelight cued us that this parent-teacher conference was going to be a new cultural experience. During my husband's 2000-2001 Fulbright Teacher Exchange, our family was living in Vaasa, Finland, and we were eager to hear how our 13-year-old Nina was progressing at school.

In the first weeks, the prefect had helped us with some early issues. Bilingual education had taken on personal meaning when all three of us tackled Swedish-to-English translation of homework. Nina's class in Finnish was taught in Swedish, one of Finland's two official languages, at her Swedish-speaking school. Her untrained ear was dizzy with a swirl of Swinnish. Finland's official, tax-supported, Lutheran religion is observed by 85% of the population, and religion is a regular class. (The teacher announced in class one day that our religion is a minority in Finland of less than 1%; this made Nina an even greater curiosity to her classmates.)

Our concern now was that Nina had already mastered the level of math presented in class this year. We knew that Finland has no gifted education services. Furthermore, Finnish teachers might not appreciate parents—especially American parents—expressing a concern that could be viewed as criticism. Living abroad made us de facto ambassadors for the United States; the mission of Fulbright Teacher Exchanges is to increase mutual international understanding. We debated whether or not to even raise the issue; we didn't want to appear as "ugly Americans." Our goal was to balance our efforts to be accepted and accepting with our desire to further our daughter's learning.

Thanking the two teachers for their work with Nina, we expressed our appreciation for her positive school experience. The lead teacher gave a report of her good progress. Then he zeroed in on our concern. "Nina, is the math at your level?" He had eliminated our dilemma. Now we had only to tactfully discuss the issue.

Nina hesitated slightly before surprising us with her answer. "Ye…es."

Nina explained that she had done this work before in advanced math classes, but since instruction now was in Swedish and she was excited to learn the language, it helped to already know the math. The teacher nodded, visibly relaxed.

His next comment took us equally by surprise. Finns, he said, don't have advanced courses "because we believe in equal opportunity." With apparent interest, he awaited our reaction.

Many thoughts flashed through our minds. Would our answer affect their treatment of Nina? Should we address our country's stance toward equal opportunity? How could our reply depict the issue's complexity? Since America's founding that dynamic duo—equality of opportunity and freedom of individual pursuit—have been dueling for preeminence. In education, we often describe these seemingly opposing goals as equity vs. excellence.

Finns are proud of their country and their schools. For centuries a battlefield between Sweden and Russia, Finland declared its independence from Russia in 1917. Finns enjoy the 15th highest standard of living in the world. Tax-paid medical care is provided to all citizens. Literacy is virtually 100%. Children ages 7-16 attend free, public school where free lunch is served to all and instruction in English and other foreign languages begins early.

Finns both criticize and emulate America. One Finnish video promoting tourism said that Finland is modern like the United States, but that Finns don't know whether to be pleased or embarrassed by that. A photo exhibit in Tampere, a communist stronghold in 1917, depicted unflattering scenes in the life of one wealthy American family. Many Finns have relatives in North America; many mentioned having visited—or wanting to visit—the US. In the emigration wave in the early twentieth century, the

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United States was both a beacon of hope and a reason for sorrow to Finland. Men departed for jobs and a better future and many failed to contact their wives afterward; America was called "the Widow-Maker." Exposés aired on state-run television explored racism in America; news articles on America cast a bleak look at overweight youth, violence in schools, and inefficient elections by disinterested voters.

Many Finns speak excellent English, especially the younger generations. I asked one teen why she had entered her school's Teaching Content in English program, where some academic subjects were taught in English. "To find a job abroad." I asked Netta, 15, how it is that she and her friends speak with an American accent while their teachers speak with a British accent. She shrugged and smiled. "Music. TV."

Ironically, the very pervasiveness of images from the United States makes it more difficult for others to understand America. Images seen and heard every day in American music, movies, video games, TV programs, and commercials are typically shallow or artificial—yet so ubiquitous that non-Americans are certain they know America. America's national character is deeper, its diversity richer, and even its sheer size greater than many of our friends in Finland at first realized.

Friends and acquaintances envisioned our life at home to be like televised reruns from *Bay Watch*, *Dynasty*, and *The Bold and the Beautiful*. Almost daily, someone mentioned the racism, poverty, violence, and godless commercialism in America that they saw featured on their TV screens. We shared books, maps, postcards, and snapshots that we had brought from home to show something of our lives, which could more accurately be titled *The Bold and the Bumbling*. Through listening and sharing we found both commonalities and differences among our friends, colleagues, and neighbors in Finland.

Stepping outside our culture for a year gave our family a chance to see the American forest for the trees. Americans have believed, with historic success, that improving society advances democracy and self-actualization. We search for better ways to do things. With American gusto, we openly voice dissatisfaction with our systems; we are particularly savage toward our schools.

Finns, who value consensus and a high degree of nationalism, often misunderstand Americans. We are both patriotic and vitriolic; how can Americans love their country, they wonder, if they so openly and vigorously criticize it? Americans feel at home with this seeming contradiction. In our drive to improve the United States, we regard differences of opinion as healthy.

In a 1999 study by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, 28 nations assessed their 14-year-olds' knowledge of common democratic principles. Americans can both applaud and decry the results. American students' total civic knowledge (i.e., content and skills) was above the international average with no nation scoring significantly higher. In civic skills, American students scored significantly higher than the international average and highest of all participating nations. We can be pleased at how our schools successfully prepare students for life in democratic society.

However, in typical American fashion, we can also lament the results. In civic content, American students were only slightly above average, with six of the 28 nations scoring higher. We might cry, "Is this the best we can do? With the resources and can-do-it-iveness of America, can't we better prepare our youth?"

Fingers could be pointed at the study's results which uncover what may be part of the problem; while 89% of US students reportedly read about democracy from a textbook and 88% fill in worksheets, only 45% debate and discuss ideas and a mere 40% engage in role-play (e.g., mock trials). American parents and educators advocating gifted education would be the first to shake their heads. Debating, discussing, and role-play demand no special funding. Guided by skilled teachers, these high-participation activities—which naturally attract teens' interest—strengthen students' critical thinking skills.

Despite severe criticism of our schools, America does an impressive job; we educate annually over 53 million students in grades K-12, a larger percentage of the US population and including a greater degree of cultural diversity than at any time in history. Bureau of the Census figures for 1999 show that 66% of 25-to 29-year-olds in the US have completed some college coursework and 32% of high-school completers have earned a bachelor's or higher degree.

Finland, consistent with its national goals and character, likewise pushes for excellence. This nation of only 5.5 million is increasing its influence in international trade and relations. Finland's Nokia, the world's largest manufacturer of cell phones, aims to capture 40% of the world market in handheld communication devices. Hosting the presidency of the European Union in1999, Finland earned international acclaim for its leadership.

"Gifted education is so new to us that it is not yet a topic of discussion. It is even rather somewhat taboo. I would like my students to know about gifted education. I believe we may have a need for this."

—Susann Sjöström, Professor of Teacher Education, Åbo Akademi

Like American parents of gifted students, several Finnish parents told us that they want more challenges for their children in their schools. Susann Sjöström, Professor of Teacher Education at Åbo Akademi, introduced a lesson on gifted education to her student teachers. According to Sjöström, "Gifted education is so new to us that it is not yet a topic of discussion. It is even rather somewhat taboo. I would like my students to know about gifted education. I believe we may have a need for this."

In a spring 2001 survey I conducted of 63 Finnish student teachers and administrators, responses indicated a belief that gifted education could be beneficial. Responding to the following statement, "Educators today appropriately meet the special learning needs of gifted students," 69% of the respondents disagreed. However, 98% agreed that, "Schools should provide instructional opportunities that meet the special learning needs of gifted students."

Paraphrasing Thomas Jefferson, a professor warned my class of student teachers, "Nothing is so unfair as equal treatment of students. Would I tell a student whose grandmother died the night

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before and who didn't meet today's due date that I cannot make an allowance? Treating her the same as everyone else would be unfair."

When schools appropriately challenge all students, including our gifted, we build up society's pool of talent, positive leadership, life-saving solutions, and creativity. We develop each child's unique potential to achieve satisfying career choices, meaningful life goals, and important contributions to society. According to Albert Einstein, "All that is valuable in human society depends upon the opportunity for development accorded to the individual."

When schools do not help students develop their gifts, societies choose, by default, an inequitable system whereby only families' personal fortunes finance enrichment opportunities. Children from more fortunate circumstances enjoy enrichment through private means, such as lessons, travel, and educational supplies. Equal opportunity for achievement of individual potential encourages both equity and excellence.

Our immediate response to the teachers would confirm or confront stereotypes about the US, and possibly affect their attitude toward Nina, toward us, and toward gifted education. Facing the teachers, we knew that our response could not portray the many faces of American education. Yet we could speak from our perspective. I replied that we too believe in equal opportunity—the opportunity for individual children to reach the potential within themselves; and while it often fails to happen—ideally, students move ahead in their learning as they are ready.

The teacher nodded. Advancing some students more quickly in math, he said, was being considered.

After leaving, Nina said that it had seemed most important to show the teachers her genuine excitement at attending their school. Nina had balanced her need in math with other enriching opportunities. We weren't surprised; Americans feel comfortable balancing seemingly opposing goals. Equity and excellence: not a duel—but a dynamic duo.

MARLA DOHERTY, teacher, SENG-trained facilitator of Guided Parent Discussions to Support the Emotional Needs of Gifted students, and mother of two, lives with her husband and younger daughter, Nina, in northern California.

STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE ACHIEVEMENT AMONG GIFTED MINORITY STUDENTS

From *Underachievement Among Gifted Minority Students: Problems and Promises.*
ERIC EC Digest #E544
by Donna Y. Ford and Antoinette Thomas,1997

GOAL/OBJECTIVE

To affirm the self-worth of students and convey the promise of greater potential and success

To provide social and emotional support

Recommended Strategies: Supportive

Provide opportunities for students to discuss concerns with teachers and counselors

Address issues of motivation, self-perception and self-efficacy

Accommodate learning styles

Modify teaching styles (e.g., abstract, concrete, visual, auditory)

Use mastery learning

Decrease competitive, norm-referenced environments

Use cooperative learning and group work

Use positive reinforcement and praise

Seek affective and student-centered classrooms

Set high expectations of students

Use multicultural education and counseling techniques and strategies

Involve mentors and role models

Involve family members in substantive ways

GOAL/OBJECTIVE

To help students develop internal motivation

To increase academic engagement and self-efficacy

Recommended Strategies: Intrinsic

Provide constructive and consistent feedback

Give choices, focus on interests

Vary teaching styles to accommodate learning styles

Provide for active and experiential learning (e.g., role plays, simulations, case studies, projects, internships)

Use bibliotherapy and biographies

Use mentorships and role models

Adopt an education that is multicultural – culturally relevant and personally meaningful, an education that provides insight and self-understanding

Have nurturing, affirming classrooms

GOAL/OBJECTIVE

To improve students' academic performance in the specific area(s) of difficulty.

Recommended Strategies: Remedial

Implement academic counseling (e.g., tutoring, study skills, test-taking skills)

Teach time management and organization

Use individual and small group instruction

Use learning contracts, learning journals.

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http://ericec.org/digests/e544.html.

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Identifying Young Gifted Disadvantaged Children in the K–3 Classroom

BY JOAN FRANKLIN SMUTNY

Thousands of young gifted children pass through our schools every year unidentified and unserved. In a longitudinal study, Torrance (1980) tells the story of Tammy Debbins, a talented first grader from the projects with an IQ of 177. Like many young children, Tammy had an imaginary friend. The school didn't understand this and tried to suppress it, along with her other gifts. By third grade, Tammy's performance and creativity had become average. Torrance reported that Tammy never used her talents in high school or afterwards and that her greatest frustration in life was that she wasn't "very smart"(p. 52).

Tammy's experience demonstrates why early identification for high ability minority students is so critical. Yet, a number of obstacles make this difficult. For one, many schools in the United States don't offer programs until the third or fourth grade because standardized testing is considered less reliable in the primary grades and they don't have alternative methods to identify giftedness. Second, schools that have poor and culturally different students often adopt a "deficit orientation" to their population. That is, they tend to look on these children as needing some form of remedial education before developing their talents and abilities (Kitano & Perez 1998, pp. 120-121).

Recognize the Limits of Testing

It's important to realize that, as a general rule, standardized tests are inadequate measures of ability in young children. Young minority students face an additional challenge in the cultural bias of many testing instruments (Bernal, 2001). Normed on predominantly white, middle class students, standardized tests measure ability in terms of the dominant culture (Torrance 1998) and allow children to slip through the cracks of the system.

There are alternative instruments such as Torrance's Tests of Creative Thinking, and the non-reading Raven Progressive Matrices Test, both of which have leveled the playing field for culturally different gifted children. But even the most culture-fair tests are, at best, only a partial assessment of actual ability. As a teacher once put it to me, many of these students need time to show their abilities:

> Our school has a pull-out program for gifted first and second graders. The problem is that the testing and ranking system pretty much excludes the bilingual and minority kids. I'm thinking of Kendra who can't sit still long enough to take a test. Yet she's got an incredibly sharp wit and always has the most original solutions to problems we work on. But because she speaks in a dialect, won't pay attention for long, and turns in sloppy and incomplete work, she'll never get in our program, and that's sad. She's one of those hidden treasures that you can only notice over time.

Network with Parents

Among disadvantaged and culturally different populations, parents may or may not recognize the abilities of their children—the "hidden treasures" in their midst. In cases where they know little about giftedness and never think of their children in this way, teachers should be willing to provide information and guidance. Here are some useful guidelines for communicating with parents:

- Talk to the parents in a way that doesn't make them feel you're correcting or "enlightening" them. Your only interest is in sharing information you think may be useful.
- Discuss the stereotype of the gifted child (book nerd, academically inclined, high achiever) and how it has blinded society to other kinds of gifted children and deprived them from getting the support they need.
- Give them an overview of the different ways talent can express itself (e.g., problem-solving ability, insightfulness, creativity, artistry, musicality, improvisational ability, sensitivity toward others, leadership, physical grace and agility).
- Explain that you're meeting with them because you'd like their input on the abilities and learning styles of their children, that this will help you adjust class activities to fit their needs.
- Have materials you can share with them, as well as lists of books and other resources they can use to learn more on their own.

Observe Behavior

Consulting with parents at the beginning of the year gives teachers a head start on understanding the unique abilities and learning needs of their students. In this regard, the Fisher Comprehensive Assessment of Giftedness Scale (Fisher, 1994) is an excellent resource for guiding educators through the process. Teachers and parents examine children's in-class and out-of-school behaviors in response to their environment. The scale ranks children's sensibility—their keen insight, enthusiasm, interest, in-depth focus, and creative output. When combined with Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1993), the Scale covers broad areas of potential ability in young minority students (Fisher, 1997).

In many cases, teachers need to consider new ways of thinking about and observing giftedness. Fundamental to a fair assessment of ability are the following:

- **Look for giftedness in more domains than the academic** (e.g., creative imagination, wit, improvisation, kinesthetic abilities, and hands-on problem solving). Become aware of your own ideas about what giftedness looks like or what behaviors indicate high potential. Don't assume that gifted children are early readers or even high achievers. Don't assume that an athletic child with little interest in academics or a bilingual student struggling with English is unlikely to be gifted.
- **Look beyond "good" or "bad" behavior.** Consider the role that good behavior plays in your or your school's assessment of a child's ability. Do teacher-pleasers get more opportunity as a reward for their good behavior? While problem

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behavior needs to be addressed, some gifted kids act up because of frustation or boredom.

- **Create activities that demand higher level thinking and creative solutions.** It is obvious that a child who needs hands-on activities to process information and analyze problems will not show these abilities if no such activities occur in the classroom. Be willing to incorporate different learning styles and materials so that more young students can demonstrate their strengths.
- **Allow students to express their ideas in different ways.** For example, a child from another culture may have a novel solution to a problem, but may express this better through diagrams and drawings than verbal or written expression. Offer young students a variety of ways to show what they are learning.
- **Ask children about their work.** Don't assume that you know what a student is trying to do or whether or not it works. It may be that their ideas are more interesting or sophisticated than their abilities to express them. Uneven development is common in young children and cultural differences may enhance this phenomenon.

When assessing the behavior of young children, teachers need to be sensitive to differences in learning style, development, and cultural background that influence the way they process information and respond to activities in the classroom. Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences (1993) and E. Paul Torrance's (1998) creative positives are helpful sources for designing comprehensive checklists and opening up the classroom to a more diverse range of gifts and talents in young children.

Collect Student Work

As an adjunct to documenting observed behaviors, collecting actual samples of children's work expands the process of identification even more. These samples could include: art work, science experiments, construction projects, essays, conversations (written down or recorded), footage of problem solving activities, and anecdotes. Obviously, there are cases where a child's work does not result in a product we can see. This is where anecdotes become useful in filling in the blanks. Parents and community leaders as well as other teachers can contribute their stories as an ongoing written record of abilities and achievement. Here is a story from a second-grade teacher:

> The gym teacher just told me something interesting about James. Supposedly, a big fight was about to break out yesterday between a friend of James and some bully from the neighborhood. James stepped in between them and managed to sort out their disagreement peacefully. He impressed his friends so much that he's the talk of our grade right now—which is amazing because he's such a quiet, unassuming little guy. This ability James has to think quickly on his feet and lead others had never occurred to me. There's no test we have for that! But now I'm thinking that this gift may be the key to reach James in the classroom.

"Don't assume that an athletic child with little interest in academics or a bilingual student struggling with English is unlikely to be gifted"

Concluding Thoughts

It is unlikely that standardized testing will lose its authority in the schools, even for young students. So, if we want to cast our nets more effectively over the "hidden treasures" (e.g., culturally different and disadvantaged gifted young children), we need to make identification an ongoing process where students have some choice in the way they show their abilities. We also need a weighting system that confers equal value over all the criteria used to identify young children (e.g., test scores, checklists, portfolios, and observations).

Becoming more aware of the limitations of traditional identification practices and the benefits of using more sources, teachers can ensure that fewer eligible students are excluded from the services and programs they need. This is a vitally important goal as greater numbers of gifted minority children look to us for advocacy and for opportunities to enter the world of gifted education as equal citizens. As we embrace a larger vision of what early identification means to the thousands of underserved minority students, we will find that in developing new ways to find these children, we have also gained a key to serving them. ■

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Tiered Lessons: What Are Their Benefits and Applications?

BY CAROL ANN TOMLINSON

Jason was confused about what the teacher was explaining, and his face made that clear to the teacher. Tia was frustrated too. She knew the teacher was about to explain again (for at least the third time) something she already understood. Although the students weren't aware of it, their teacher was frustrated too. She needed to be sure each of her students was comfortable and competent with what she was trying to teach, but it was clear to her that the work she planned was frustrating some students, boring others, and seemed to accomplish her goals for still other students. It was difficult to make the class a good fit for all of her learners when their past experiences, background knowledge, and pace of learning varied so widely.

Tiered Lessons to the Rescue

One instructional strategy of great benefit in any class where students learn at varying paces and to varied depths is the strategy called tiering. This instructional strategy allows a teacher to accomplish two critical things at once. First, tiering allows the teacher to keep all students focused on the same essential learning goals. Second, tiering enables the teacher to develop student tasks and products that are at appropriate levels of complexity for the varied learners in the classroom.

In essence, a tiered lesson enables all students to work on common goals, but at a degree of difficulty appropriate for their current individual needs. Many elements in a classroom can be tiered—for example: learning centers, journal prompts, math problems, homework, products or projects, learning contracts, and tests. Tiering is a great approach whenever teachers realize they have students of varying readiness levels, but still need to work with all students on common learning goals much of the time.

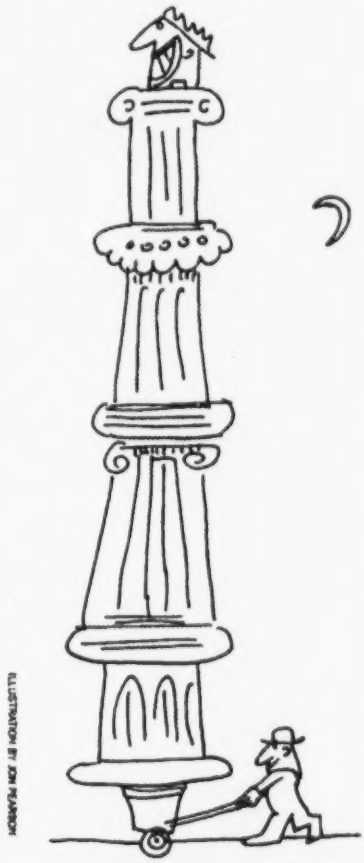

ILLUSTRATION BY JON PEARSON

TIERING TO THE RESCUE

"A tiered lesson enables all students to work on common goals, but at a degree of difficulty appropriate for their current individual needs."

Why Tiering?

Student readiness affects student learning. It's a simple truth that is difficult to address in the classroom. Any teacher who has taught more than half an hour has observed what happens to a student who can't keep up with the pace of work, complexity of explanations or directions, or who has gaps in knowledge that serve as barriers to growth. Similarly, the teacher has likely observed the boredom (and perhaps misbehavior) in students who are ready to move ahead with the subject when both the pace and complexity of the class is less advanced than is the learner.

Beyond what teachers observe in the classroom, psychologists recognize the impact of student readiness on learning from their classroom observations as well. They tell us that when tasks seem frequently out of reach to a student, the student becomes anxious, which, in turn negatively affects student motivation and achievement. Likewise, psychologists tell us that students who are bored in a class undergo a decline in motivation and achievement. Even when the latter group earns A's for work that is too easy, they are not really succeeding. That is, they are not growing, but rather "marching in place." They are likely to develop a certain disdain for the system that gives them fraudulent grades, at the same time they get addicted to easy A's.

Psychologists tell us that we teach best and students learn best when task difficulty is a match for learner readiness. The Russian psychologist Vygotsky echoes the findings of many others in his field when he tells us that people learn only when the work they do is in their "zone of proximal development." That is, we learn when the work is just a little too hard for us. If the work is way too difficult, we are frustrated. If the work is too easy for us, we function in an independent zone and do not extend our knowledge. Learning happens when a student understands much of what a task calls for, but has some uncertainly about how to accomplish the task. An effective task creates both the comfort and the uncertainty—and then provides a support system to bridge the gap.

More recently, brain researchers have examined activity in the brain as learners interact with learning tasks. Their conclu-

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sions echo the observations of both teachers and psychologists. Brain researchers also tell us that we learn only when we are moderately' challenged. Again, we learn when tasks are a little too hard for us. When tasks are out of a student's reach, activity in the thinking part of the student's brain literally shuts down, and the student's energies turn to protecting himself or herself from harm or humiliation. When the work is too easy for a student, that learner also is not in a thinking mode, but rather shows the brain activity of early sleep. Therefore, say brain researchers, if we want students to learn, we must try to design learning experiences that are just in front of a student's knowledge, understanding, and skill.

The problem, of course, is that what is moderately challenging for some students in a class may well be too easy for some others, and too advanced for yet another group of learners in the same room. That's where tiering comes in. Tiering enables teachers to have students work on the same learning goals, but at degrees of complexity likely to match students' varied zones of proximal development.

What Does Tiering Look Like?

It's helpful to look at some snapshots of tiering in action. We'll take a look at four scenarios involving tiering.

Tiering in Kindergarten Math

Early in the year, students in Ms. Page's kindergarten class differ widely in their comfort with numbers and counting. They practice counting individually and as a class in many ways, many times a day. One way Ms. Page tries to deal with students' varying proficiency levels with counting is through a tiered learning center on counting. There are four color-coded tasks at the center. Students find their name on a chart to learn which color task they will complete during a given day. The simplest task asks students to count a small number of items in a box and a small number of items on a poster. Students record an answer and tell whether there were more items in the box or on the poster..

At a slightly greater degree of difficulty, students are asked to count larger numbers of items in a box and on a poster and to draw which had the larger number of items and which had the smaller number of items. At a somewhat more advanced level, students are asked to adjust the contents of a box of items so that it contains the same number of items as a poster depicting the same items. They also tell what someone should do to make any set of items bigger and smaller than another set of items. At a still more advanced level, students not only work with a much larger number of items in the box and on the poster, but also show many ways to make the box of items bigger and smaller than the poster of items.

Over time, Ms. Page changes the items in the boxes and on the posters, changes the number of items, changes the directions, and moves students among the tasks as they grow in their competency with counting.

> "Psychologists tell us that we teach best and students learn best when task difficulty is a match for learner readiness... we learn when the work is just a little too hard for us."

She may also vary the number of tasks at the counting center. She continues to use tiering, however, to ensure that all students can practice counting independently on tasks that are appropriately geared to their current learning needs.

Tiering in Fourth Grade Social Studies.

Mr. Larsen is working with his fourth graders on using latitude and longitude to locate places on a map and make predictions about the nature of the places based on their latitude and longitude. Some students are familiar with the concepts as the unit begins. Others catch on quickly. For some students, however, the concepts are abstract and murky. Mr. Larsen knows this from observing the students as they work in class, from classroom discussions, and from students' written work.

Today, he will ask students to complete a tiered task on latitude and longitude. It's designed to help each student stretch his or her current understanding and skill related to latitude and longitude just a bit. Some students will be given maps with latitude and longitude labeled. The map also contains names of several places students should know about from earlier studies. Students will also be given names of several cities along with their latitudes and longitudes. Students will locate the new places accurately on the map, and use their relationship to familiar places to make predictions about temperature, weather, language, food sources, and occupation of the less familiar places. Finally, students will be asked to explain how they arrived at their conclusions.

Students more comfortable with the concepts of latitude and longitude will be given names of obscure locations, with no latitude and longitude provided. They will need to find out the missing data and use it to locate the places on the map. These students will then need to determine more familiar places that are relatively near the new places, locate them on the map accurately, and create a chart that makes predictions about climate, culture, economy, and leisure activities in those places based on what they know about the familiar locations they selected as points of comparison. They will also need to justify their comparisons.

Both groups have the same essential task, but the degree of difficulty, or complexity of the tasks, varies to match the current readiness of students to deal with the central concepts and skills of the lesson.

Tiering in Middle School Literature

In her eighth grade literature class, Ms. Leandra is working with her students on abstracting themes from poems. That is a very abstract concept, and is difficult for some students, but relatively natural for others. The teacher has developed a tiered task to help all students progress in their comfort with identifying themes in poetry. The lesson was a quick and easy one for her to create. She decided to work with four levels of difficulty. All students will need to read a poem, develop a statement that suggests both a theme for the poem and an explanation of how the student arrived at his or her conclusion about the theme.

To make the task a match for the students, she selected four different poems for analysis. Some of the poems deal with more

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concrete and familiar topics, have accompanying pictures that provide clues about the poem's meanings, are categorized in the book in ways that suggest themes, and so on. Some of the poems are more abstract, may deal with more complex topics, may have more complex vocabulary and/or allusions, are not illustrated, and so on. All students will analyze a poem for theme and be prepared to explain how they approached the analysis, so the teacher can conduct a whole class discussion on that topic. The actual task, however, is more likely to be appropriately challenging for more students than if all students had interpreted the same poem at this point in their learning.

Tiering in Twelfth Grade Government. Ms. Weingartener and her high school government students are exploring the elasticity of the U.S. Constitution. Right now, they are looking at the evolving way in which the document has been interpreted as times change in order to grant freedoms and protections to a wider group of citizens. The class will have a seminar on Friday in which students will be prepared to support or refute the premise that the Constitution was written so it could evolve with an evolving society. Specifically, students will illustrate their positions with evidence related to rights for minorities, women, and young people under the 14th Amendment.

In this school, there are more materials available at a more basic readability level on rights for women and African Americans. In addition, students generally are more familiar with issues surrounding these populations. Thus some groups will select one of these groups to study in preparation for the seminar. Reading material on more recent immigrant groups and on rights for young people are generally more complex, and, in addition, students are less likely to be familiar with issues surrounding rights for these populations.

More advanced groups will select from these less familiar populations for their preparation. All students will have a guide for their research that suggests ways of proceeding efficiently and key questions for inquiry. All students will contribute to the seminar and wrap-up discussion that follows. However, matching topics and resources to student readiness is likely to prompt both more success and more engagement for students in the class than had they all worked with the same resources and target topics.

Conclusion

The idea of tiering is not so difficult, and it can go a long way in alleviating the frustration of teachers and students alike when common learning goals are in place for students whose readiness for those goals is diverse.

For advanced learners, tiering is a message that learning should be challenging, that success should be earned, and that continued growth in school is non-negotiable. All those things serve advanced learners far better than do automatic A's on work that calls for little new knowledge, skill, or understanding, in a setting that implies that once a student achieves the norm, they can coast.

Remember when you plan tiering, the goal of a tiered lesson is not to create two, three, four, or five totally different tasks. Rather, it is to create several versions of essentially the same task at varied degrees of difficulty. Especially when combined with small group teaching, effective tiering can boost the engagement, motivation, and achievement of far more students in a classroom. ■

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Something To Consider

NNAT

Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test

In his role as an external evaluator of a Javits grant in three rural districts along the U.S.-Mexico border, Ernesto Bernal made a comparison of two "non-verbal" testing instruments: the Raven Progressive Matrices (RPM) and the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT). Although the sample studied was small, the newer NNAT appeared to have greater predictive validity in this rural population of Mexican American children than did the Raven.

Professionals agree that no single test instrument should determine the identification and placement of children in programs for the gifted. There is also agreement that we need to continue to refine our methods and measuring instruments in our quest for equal access and service to all children in our schools. Bernal's work suggests that we should look closely at the NNAT as another possible measure to add to our repertoire.

The NNAT is similar in format to the Raven with four item types: pattern completion, reasoning by analogy, serial reasoning, and spatial visualization. It is available from The Psychological Corporation.

Bernal, E. (2001). *Empirical methods for selecting tests for identification of gifted and talented CLD students.* **Unpublished manuscript.**

PLANNING TIERED LESSONS

The goal of tiering is to hold key learning goals essentially the same while varying the complexity of ways in which students work toward those goals. These steps might be helpful to you in thinking about tiering:

1. Plan to tier when variance in student readiness is evident to you as a result of formal or informal assessment.
2. Be sure you are very clear on what students should know (facts, names, dates, terms, definitions), understand (big ideas, insights, principles), and be able to do (skills) as a result of the lesson you are about to tier.
3. Think of a task you have used in the past to help students achieve these goals. (If necessary, develop a new one.)
4. Make sure the task will ensure that students come to know, understand, and be able to do what your goals specify.
5. Think about the readiness range in your class as well as groupings of students you have used in the recent past. Decide on the number of tiers you want the task to contain.
6. Generate other versions of the task that accomplish what your original task is designed to accomplish, but develop the new tiers at a greater or lesser degree of difficulty than your original task.
7. Check to make sure all the tiers will accomplish the same essential learning goals and that each task would be equally appealing to your learners.

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RECRUITING BILINGUAL TEACHERS

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with other teachers at the sites where the bilingual GT program will operate, benefits can accrue to students and teachers who are not formally a part of the program. To avoid internal problems at a school site where the bilingual GT program is being implemented, each and every perquisite should help the bilingual GT teachers bring the new program on line, as it were, and support active experimentation and professional sharing as well. Innovative programs are, perforce, resource-hungry (Fullan & Miles, 1992). The other teachers at the site can be convinced of the desirability of these expenditures and opportunities if they (and their students) can also benefit from the new desktop printer and software, can access the new fiber-optic line that runs by their classrooms to the GT classroom, can receive training in giftedness and the process of nominating students for the program as a way of meeting their obligation to earn some continuing professional educational credit, and can learn about using GT instructional methods (Beecher, 1995) in their regular classrooms.

Effective Recruitment Is Contextually Bound to the Conditions of Good Retention

Good leadership working through a cross-role group of professionals (Fullan & Miles, 1992), in short, can reduce professional envy and give the bilingual GT teachers the opportunities to receive the necessary training, work and bond together, plan the bilingual units and the applications of the strategies, and secure the public recognition and administrative support to protect them through the "vulnerable" period and consolidate their commitment to the program. Ultimately, it may reasonably be expected that these outstanding teachers will play an integral role in recruiting minority students and teachers into gifted education (Ford, Grantham, & Harris, 1997).

The basic process of recruitment, then, if not simple, is disarmingly straightforward, in the professional sense. It consists of identifying exceptionally creative and proficient bilingual teachers from either GT education or bilingual education; inviting, them to participate in shaping the new bilingual GT venture; pointing out the particular contributions one is expecting them, as individuals, to make to the overall plan; showing them the actual commitment of the school district's bilingual and GT programs to support the new program with resources; training them as necessary in GT or in bilingual methodologies; and then allowing them to network with each other, with the GT and bilingual coordinators, and with their school principals in order to evolve the bilingual GT curriculum over several years.

In the author's experience in consulting and evaluating bilingual GT efforts in five projects involving seven school districts, high levels of commitment from the district result in (1) the selection of a highly competent and stable cadre of teachers and (2) the design and implementation of a sound and efficacious curriculum. Lesser levels of commitment, provided that good training is forthcoming, will still yield high-quality teachers, but their levels of frustration subsequent to deployment in their new roles without good support will burn them out, cause them to experience high turnover rates, and not yield a sensible, integrated curriculum from them.

The Preparation of Bilingual Teachers for a Gifted Bilingual Program

The short inservice courses offered by districts or agencies of the state to prepare teachers to teach gifted children typically address such topics as the nature of giftedness, its assessment, basic instructional strategies (such as improved questioning techniques and brainstorming), the cultivation of higher order thinking skills (including creativity), and the special needs of GT students. In Texas, state guidelines to achieve the "acceptable" level of compliance for the professional development of GT teachers are general: the nature and needs of GT students, assessing student needs, and curriculum and instruction for gifted students (Texas Education Agency, 1996), although extended participation by teachers, counselors, administrators, and even local school board members is required to achieve the "recognized" and "exemplary" levels of review. Some schools also provide some release time for the inservice teachers to visit each other's classes or observe an experienced GT teacher work with GT students. University-based credentialing programs take the time to explore these topics in greater depth; introduce special topics, such as the teacher's role in counseling the gifted; study instructional models for the gifted; and frequently provide supervised practice.

Very few district, state, or university programs, however, make explicit provision for dispelling the stereotypes of minority students (Tonemah, 1992), much less for incorporating multicultural or bilingual education into GT classrooms. Neither do they prepare the teachers of the gifted to help the parents of these children to better support their children. The skills of working with parents can be learned on the job, of course, out of a sense of urgency to help certain children. The multicultural educational concerns, however, will probably not be so readily addressed (Banks, 1994) unless strong leadership and direction is provided at the program level and at the school site to make these accommodations without sacrificing the GT program's standards or rigor (Bernal & Amabrisca, 1996), or unless a particularly sensitive and willing group of teachers decides to take on the task (Ford, Grantham, & Harris, 1997) of preparing all of today's GT students to function together effectively and peacefully in twenty-first century America.

WIthin the gifted education literature, empirically based articles about staff development are extremely few in number (Johnsen, 1998, p. 29). The experience of two districts is recounted here from the point of view of one who observed many of the staff development activities take place. Keep in mind that in both districts, the teachers selected had high levels of fluency and literacy in the non-English language of choice, which was Spanish in these instances.

San Diego City Schools' Project EXCEL (Bernal, Perez, & Rode, 1997) began the inservice preparation of their bilingual GT teachers by using a local certification process that incorporated certain major topics and objectives, which are adumbrated as follows:

Characteristics and behaviors of GT students

- To gain an understanding of the varied expressions of cognitive, social, and emotional characteristics and behaviors of gifted students and the concomitant needs arising from the students' atypical development
- To understand special needs within the gifted population
- To understand the impact of culture, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, home language, and other factors on the development, expression, and recognition of giftedness

Identification and assessment of the GT students

- To become familiar with the district's

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GATE identification philosophies and procedures
- To understand how cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic factors can affect the assessment and achievement of individual students

Differentiated curriculum and instruction for GT learners
- To understand curricular differentiation for the gifted
- To be able to build, from the core program, a differentiated curriculum
- To be able to plan a classroom program based on student assessment data
- To become aware of the variety of learning styles exhibited by GT students and teaching strategies appropriate to meet their instructional needs
- To acquire knowledge of several classroom management techniques
- To develop an awareness of the variety of program models appropriate for gifted education
- To become knowledgeable about current issues that affect the education of the gifted, to identify trends in the field, and to be able to utilize current research in GT education to improve program implementation

Parenting the gifted
- To acquire a variety of resources to share with parents on parenting skills and understanding the gifted child at home
- To learn how to involve parents in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of classroom and site GT programs

Professional development
- To enhance the teacher's understanding of self as learner and the impact of self-knowledge on gifted students' learning
- To acquire the knowledge and ability to defend the appropriateness of GT education
- To learn about professional and lay organizations that promote gifted education
- To be provided with information about opportunities for continued professional development in GT education

All training sessions involved the teachers in discussion and "make and take" activities, and follow-up at each campus occurred through the project coordinator and other observers (Perez & Bernal, 1996), so that levels of implementation were reported in the annual evaluation summaries (Bernal, Perez, & Rode, 1997).

The teacher training program for the El Paso program was linked from the beginning to a particular school and to the needs and desires of the teachers who were invited to participate by the GT and bilingual program coordinators and the school principal (Bernal, 1999). Mesita School was considered the ideal site, because the parents were well organized and wanted dual language instruction for their GT children. Grades 1 to 3 were selected to start the project, because the GT parents were clamoring to see a well-organized GT program at these levels. The three teachers were already dually certified in bilingual and gifted education; indeed, one of them was teaching in the gifted program at the selected school. All three accepted the challenge and became part of the planning group, which thereafter met frequently with consultants, university professors from the area, and district administrators in what this author observed to be an atmosphere of joint decision making and a commitment to excellence.

The preparation of the El Paso teachers continued into the summer before the project started and consisted of a course in two-way bilingual immersion methodology (Montes, 1998), the district's planned inservice in bilingual and GT, opportunities to review and purchase many new educational materials, and joint planning for acceleration and continuity of curriculum across the years. By February of the project's first year, a teacher for the fourth grade was selected. This teacher had completed student teaching in the program's third grade during the fall term. This process, which involved all of the stakeholders in the project, not only yielded a teacher who was a "known quantity" for the program, but also provided her with mentoring in a supportive, site-based environment, which, generally, is so important to the success and retention of bilingual teachers (Gonzales & Sosa, 1993).

Teacher Retention in the Bilingual Gifted and Talented Program

The San Diego program's experience with teacher turnover occurred mainly in the period between the second and third year of the program. Not many of the Project EXCEL teachers left, but reflection on the experience suggests that a number of factors were involved, including demographic and bureaucratic influences. The Post and Bid provisions for new openings elsewhere in the district attracted some of the teachers who, having been recruited to EXCEL as new teachers to the district, were, by the end of their second year, eligible to bid on jobs in more favorable school environments, where less poverty and less crowding and better facilities were available. The Southeast region of the district has traditionally been plagued by high teacher turnover, and Project EXCEL was not immune. The schools in this region are large and overcrowded, and many new teachers feel overwhelmed by the situations they encounter. However, most teachers stayed in the program because of their commitment to these same schools, especially to the children in these settings.

The moral seems clear: Select teachers who are more experienced and committed to working in these school settings. Care must be taken, of course, not to accept any teachers whose marginal skills have forced them to take refuge in these types of sites, but local recruitment of known teachers seems to be a definite plus. It also seems likely that inner-city schools that adopt an innovative GT program will have a somewhat higher turnover rate than will programs in the affluent suburbs. Project evaluators on larger projects should consider making turnover comparisons within these sites part of their evaluation reports.

Summary

Ford et al. (1997) remind us that teachers from nondominant ethnic groups not only "work effectively with minority students," but "also have a positive influence on the development of White students" (p. 216). Given the relative scarcity of teachers from nondominant ethnic groups and the relatively high potential of GT students to provide the leadership, the material innovations, and the cultural substrate necessary for social change, perhaps more teachers of color should dedicate their efforts entirely to the education and moral formation of the gifted.

Multicultural education can promote multicultural understanding among the gifted. Bilingual GT education has the potential to achieve parity for culturally and linguistically different learners in the GT program. In ethnically and linguistically integrated settings, bilingual/multicultural GT education can also promote the academic skills and lifetime achievements of all GT children preparing to live as adults in the new millennium. As with any cur-

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ricular innovation, bilingual GT education depends on the quality of the teachers recruited and the quality of the support given them. Recruitment of such teachers, if done on a highly personalized basis, is not difficult, experience shows, but retention of good teachers whose services are in demand requires, initially, good training and, later, an exceptional—even gifted—administrator and a program that calls on the teachers' initiative and creativity to keep it dynamic. ■

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Opening the Door to the American Public School System

BY SANDI ORTIZ ISHII

TRANSLATOR: CARMELITA FIERRO

Parents carry the awesome responsibility of guiding their children through childhood with the hope that they will become happy, productive, self-sufficient adults. This task is made more difficult by the complex society we live in today. As a parent of a third-year university student, I know that I have been assisted in parenting him by other family members, as well as by experts who shared their knowledge and experience with me.

Having a child that is gifted adds another complex dimension to the task of understanding and parenting a child. Gifted children have intellectual and creative drives within them that must be met. Understanding your children's gifts and learning to meet their needs can help them blossom to their full potentials. Most of the time this giftedness leads them to higher education where their gifts can be more fully explored, and hopefully developed into personally fulfilling careers.

In order to best meet the needs of your gifted children, you as parents have the prime responsibility to guide, oversee, and discipline your children as they make their way through the American public school system. It is important that you understand and involve yourself in the American school system as you guide your gifted children; they will then have more opportunities to maximize their success as they reach mature and independent adulthood.

The following information has been derived from my experiences as an educator, parent, and student. It outlines some basic principles and ideas in preparing children to take charge of their learning and gives a basic interpretation of the American school system. Your role and influence as parents is enormous; it is important that you take the time and effort needed to make it positive.

Editor's Note:
Usually our hands-on curriculum department provides ready ideas for use with students in the classroom. This time we present material to be used in parent education workshops. If you have Spanish-speaking parents, you have a head start in preparing your presentation. If you need a different language for your parents, we suggest that you have the English version translated into whatever language is appropriate, since the basic ideas are valuable for all parents.
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Abriendo la Puerta al Sistema de Escuelas Publicas Americanas

BY SANDI ORTIZ ISHII

TRADUCTORA: CARMELITA FIERRO

Los padres tienen la gran responsabilidad de guiar a sus hijos durante su infancia, con la esperanza que ellos lleguen a ser unos adultos felices, productivos e independientemente suficientes. Esta tarea se hace más complicada, por la sociedad tan compleja en la que vivimos hoy. Como padre de un estudiante en su tercer año de universidad, yo reconozco que en ese papel, yo he sido apoyada por otros miembros de la familia, pero tambien por expertos que han compartido su conocimiento y experiencia conmigo.

El tener un niño dotado agrega otra dimensión compleja a la tarea del entendimiento y el papel que el padre desempeña en el crecimiento de su hijo. Niños dotados tienen abilidades intelectuales y creativas que necesitan ser suplidas. El de poder interpretar los dones de sus hijos y el de aprender a aquilatar sus necesidades, pueden ayudarles a florecer en sus más completas posibilidades. La mayoría de las veces, este don les llevará a las escuelas superiores donde su don puede ser con más precisión explorado y tal vez desarrollado, para la realización de una carrera profesional, que no solamente será lucrativa, pero altamente satisfactoria en su vida personal.

De manera de encontrar las mejores posibilidades para sus niños dotados, ustedes como padres, tienen la responsabilidad primordial de guiar, cuidar y disciplinar a sus hijos a travez de "sus caminatas" en el sistema Americano de escuelas públicas. Es importante que ustedes entiendan y se envuelvan con el sistema de escuelas Americano a la misma vez que ustedes guian a sus hijos dotados; ellos entonces tendrán más oportunidades de un exito máximo, al alcanzar su madurez como adultos.

La siguiente información ha sido extraida de mis experiencias como una educadora, madre y estudiante. Esto enfatiza algunos principios básicos e ideas en preparar a los niños de hacerse cargo de su aprendisaje y se les da una interpretación básica del sistema escolar Americano. Su papel e influencia como padres es enorme; es muy importante que ustedes tomen el tiempo y el esfuerzo necesario para un logro positivo.

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Eight Keys to Open the Doors to Success at School

1. Let your child know you value achievement in school.

2. Help your child to develop strong language skills.

3. Parents must make their children understand that they believe their children will be successful both in school and, later in the workplace.

4. Parents must provide a strong family support system for their children.

5. Parents who nurture a strong family bond at home help their children to develop a positive image of themselves and their culture and to gain the self-confidence necessary to meet the challenges they face at school and in the community.

6. Help your child understand that his or her future can be bright with preparation and hard work. Instant success stories don't usually happen in real life. The great majority of successful adults had to deal with many challenges and obstacles along the way .

7. Do not let your child use cultural biases, or prejudices held by people at school or in the community, as an excuse for failure.

8. Parents should become involved in their child's school and extracurricular activities. By encouraging a "social bond" with the school and the community, they will help him or her to grow in confidence and self-esteem.

Hine, Candis. (1994). *Helping Your Child Find Success at School: A Guide for Hispanic Parents.*
Storrs, CT: National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented.

Ocho Claves Para Abrir las Puertas del Exito en la Escuela

1. Deje que su hijo/a sepa que usted valora el logro escolar.

2. Ayude a su hijo/a a desarrollar fuertes destrezas del lenguaje.

3. Sus hijos deben saber que usted cree en el éxito de ellos tanto en la escuela como en el trabajo.

4. Los padres deben proveer a sus hijos un fuerte apoyo familiar.

5. Los padres que crean un fuerte lazo familiar en el hogar ayudan a sus hijos a desarrollar una imagen positiva de ellos mismos y de su cultura, así como a ganar confianza en sí mismos para enfrentar desafíos en la escuela y en la comunidad.

6. Ayude a sus hijos a entender que su futuro puede ser brillante con preparación y trabajo. Las historias de éxito inmediato no suceden con frecuencia en la vida real. La mayoría de los adultos exitosos tienen que enfrentar muchos desafíos y obstáculos en su camino.

7. No deje que su hijo/a utilice predilecciones culturales o prejuicios de personas en la escuela o en la comunidad como excusa para el fracaso.

8. Los padres deberían participar en las actividades escolares y extracurriculares de sus hijos. El alentar un "lazo social" entre la escuela y la comunidad ayudará a su hijo/a a crecer con confianza y aprecio en sí mismo.

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The Demands of Giftedness

Premises

1. High-level intelligence makes certain demands upon the gifted child.
2. Behavior of gifted children results from these demands.
3. There are curriculum implications inherent in these demands.

1. To crave for knowledge—to satisfy the need to feel progress in what he is learning
2. To feel the need to focus on or devour a subject
3. To make observations; to see relationships
4. To place high standards on himself
5. To be creative or inventive; to seek an unusual or unique approach to an assignment
6. To question generalizations
7. To be serious-minded; to be intolerant (usually) of foolishness or silliness
8. To concentrate—to become totally absorbed in a task—to have a longer attention span
9. To explore wide interests at a maturity beyond his chronological age
10. To be sensitive to honor and truth
11. To express ideas and reactions (sometimes seen as argumentative)
12. To resist routine, drill; to require unique ways of pursuing drill
13. To work alone
14. To be intolerant of stupidity
15. To seek order, structure and consistency
16. To do critical, evaluative thinking (may lead to critical attitude toward self and others)
17. To be rarely satisfied with the simple and obvious
18. To be impatient with sloppy, disorganized thinking
19. To be sensitive or empathetic
20. To have his intelligence responded to
21. To seek out his mental peers
22. To be friendly and outgoing
23. To use his power of abstraction; to see and point out cause and effect relationships
24. To have time for thinking—solitude
25. To pursue a learning pace of his own (may be fast or slow)
26. To be outstanding in several areas but average in some

—Jeanne Delp, Garden Grove Unified School District, Garden Grove California

Los Requisitos de la Genialidad

Premisas

1. Altos niveles de inteligencia traen ciertas demandas en el niño dotado.
2. El comportamiento de los niños dotados resulta de estas demandas.
3. Hay implicaciones del programa de estudios inherente en estas demandas.

1. El de anhelar el conocimiento- el de satisfacer la necesidad de sentir el progreso de lo que se está aprendiendo
2. El de sentir la necesidad de enfocar o asimilar un tema
3. El de hacer observaciones - el de relacionarse con otros
4. El de poner altas normas de conducta en sí mismo
5. El de ser creativo o inventivo - el de buscar un modo original o único de abordar un puesto
6. El de inquirir acerca de generalizaciones
7. El de obrar con seriedad- el de ser intolerante (usualmente) sobre tonterías o frivolidades
8. El de concentrarse - el de totalmente ser absorto en una tarea—el de tener una concentración más duradera
9. El de explorar intereses más amplios a una madurez más alla de s edad cronológica
10. El de ser sensible al honor y la verdad
11. El de expresar ideas y reacciones (algunas veces parece argumentativas)
12. El de resistir la rutina—el de requerir modos peculiares de adquirir esa rutina
13. El de trabajar en solitud
14. El de ser intolerable a la falta de inteligencia
15. El de buscar orden, estructura y consistencia
16. El de tener una mentalidad crítica y evaluativa (pudiese tender a tener una actitud crítica a sí mismo y hacia otros)
17. El de raramente estar satisfecho con lo simple y obvio
18. El de ser impaciente con una mentalidad desordenada o desorganizada
19. El de ser sensible y comprensivo
20. El de que su intelecto sea apreciado
21. El de buscar aquellos similares a su intelecto
22. El de ser amigable y sociable
23. El de usar su fuerza de abstracción—el de ver e indicar las relaciones de causa y efecto
24. El de tener tiempo de pensar—la solitud.
25. El de buscar un propio ritmo de aprendizaje (puede ser rápido o despacio)
26. El de sobresalir en varias áreas, pero intermedio en algunas

—Jeanne Delp, Garden Grove Unified School District, Garden Grove, California

Scholarliness

Scholars spend time pondering ideas and problems.

Scholars considers themselves "half full." They exercise academic humility by realizing that they will always have more to learn.

Scholars has both long and short term goals for themselves . They have a vision for the future.

Scholars view ideas and problems from multiple perspectives.

Scholars come prepared to learn. They bring their tools with them and are ready with "Minds On."

Scholars save ideas, documents, and unfinished work so that they may come back to them later.

Scholars are curious. They ask thoughtful questions.

Scholars look at a variety of resources, whether it is reading a book in their free time or whether they are conducting research on one particular topic.

Scholars exercise their intellect by trying challenging tasks.

Scholars always do professional work. They do their best and neatest work as they "Shoot for the Stars."

Scholars take intellectual risks. They think "Outside of the Box.."

Javita Grant, Curriculum Project T.W.O. Funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, OERI, Sandra Kaplan, Project Director

Erudicion

Eruditos son minuciosos en examinar ideas y problemas.

Eruditos piensan de sí mismos como "mitad lleno." (Son modestos académicamente al piensar que siempre hay más que aprender.)

Eruditos se imponen metas de larga y corta visión para sí mismos. Ellos visualizan su futuro.

Eruditos se enfocan en ideas o problemas usando varias perspectivas.

Eruditos llegan a la escuela listos para el aprendisaje. Ellos traen sus herramientas del aprendisaje con ellos y su intelecto siempre esta iluminado y listo para aprender.

Eruditos tienen cuidado de retener ideas, documentos, y trabajo sin terminar para poder completarlo despúes.

Eruditos displayan curiosidad. Hacen preguntas de un hondo pensar.

Eruditos se investigan varios recursos, sea leer en su tiempo libre o el de hacer investigaciones en una area específica.

Eruditos ejercitan su intelecto haciendo trabajos que son un reto para él.

Eruditos presentan siempre un trabajo profesional. Ellos siempre presentan lo mejor y con una alta organización en sus trabajos, mientras siguen su motto "Alcanzan la Estrellas."

Eruditos toman riesgos intelectuales. No les da temor de crear ideas fuera de lo normal.

Javita Grant, Curriculum Project T.W.O. Funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, OERI, Sandra Kaplan, Project Director

El Papel de los Padres

Asistencia de los Padres para Una Educacion con Exito

Apoyen a los niños como estudiantes. Trabajen con su hijo diariamente. Establezcan una area especifica de estudio con un horario fijo para su tarea. Establezcan responsabilidad, respeto y reglas con todos los miembros de la familia.

Comunicación

Mantengan una linea abierta de comunicación entre Uds. y sus hijos. Comuniquense con la escuela para ayuda, apoyo o simplemente para saber como van sus hijos. Sea honestos con ustedes mismos y sus niños. Haganles preguntas que requieran una respuesta más amplia... ¿Qúe fue lo que te causó más interés hoy? ¿Cómo resolviste ese problema dificil? ¿Quienes son tus mejores amigos y que es los que más valoras en ellos? Mantengan communicación con su escuela cuando necesiten ayuda o apoyo o simplemente mantenganse informados del progreso de su hijo en la escuela.

Sea Visible en la Escuela

Ayuden o apoyen la escuela y el salón de clase lo más que puedan. Los niños desarollan un sentido de buena estima de ver a sus padres ayudando en su escuela. Nunca fallen de asistir a las funciones escolares, conferencias o actividades especiales.

Aprendan en el Hogar

Ayuden a sus hijos en proyectos escolares o tarea en casa cuando sea necesario. Provean actividades de enriquecimiento para toda la familia , ejemplo: museos, conciertos etc.. Enseñenles que Uds. todavía aprenden por medio de leer etc.. Establezcan visitas semanales a la biblioteca y ofrezcan un buen ejemplo, lean libros tambien.

No Se Les Olvide el Cariño

Los niños piensan que los padres son lo más cercano a Díos. (¡Aún los adolescentes comparten ese pensamiento!) Los abrazos y apoyo son importantes. Recuerden...¡El tiempo que es más dificil para dar cariño a un niño es el tiempo que lo necesitan más!

Compartan su Sabiduria

No mal estimen su propio criterio aúnque no hallan terminado su educación previa o tuvieron bajas calificaciones. Ayuden a su niño a construir metas para su futuro basado en la sabiduria que obtuvieron de sus experiencias anteriores en su vida. No te devalúes delante de tus hijos, dales un buen ejemplo. Si hay un tema en el cual no puedan ayudarles, mandenlos con alquien que este capacitado para hacerlo: un texto que este disponible, sus condiscípulos, sus maestros, etc.

Cuidado de no Limitar la Individualidad

No pongan a las niñas en un diferente nivel de los niños en relación a su tarea escolar. Para que las niñas reconozcan que la inteligencia es una virtud, ellas pudiesen necesitar su apoyo y aprobación para reconocerlo . Los medios de comunicación en este tiempo, bombardean a las jovenes con mensajes que no necesariamente apoyan los valores familiares. Esto puede causar que las niñas sobresalientes en sus estudios primarios pierdan la noción de esa meta anterior cuando entren a sus años formativos. Tengan cuidado con el impacto que estos medios de communición negativos pueden causarles a ellas y mantengan una comunicación abierta y honesta.

Construyan sus Metas

Hablen del futuro con sus hijos. Ayudenles a construir metas cortas y de largo plazo. Estudiantes que edifican metas propias, terminan teniendo un éxito mejor que aquellos que no las hicieron. Nunca es demasiado temprano para que Uds. inculquen a su hijo, a la probabilidad de una universidad en su futuro. Su opinión es de gran valor para su niño, ya sea que Uds. hayan ído a la universidad o no.

EJ 248

The Role of the Parent

Parenting for Educational Success
Support your child as a student. Work with your children daily. Establish a specific study area with a a regular time for homework. Establish responsibility, respect, and rules with all the members of the family.

Communication
Maintain an open line of communication between yourself and your children. Be honest with yourself and your children. Ask them open-ended questions—What was the most exciting thing you learned today? How did you solve that complex problem? Who are your best friends and what do you most value about them? Stay in communication with the school when you need help, support, or simply want knowledge as to how your children are doing in school.

Be Visible at School
Help or support the school or classroom whenever possible. Children gain a sense of pride to see their parents helping out at school. Never fail to attend school functions, conferences, or special activities.

Learn at Home
Assist your children at home with school work or projects when necessary. Provide enrichment activities for the whole family such as museums and concerts. Establish weekly visits to the library and offer a good example. Show them that you are still learning by reading books yourself.

Don't Forget Affection
Children feel their parents are the closest thing to God in their lives. (Even adolescents share this belief!) Hugs and support are important. Remember—the time when children deserve love the least is when they need love the most!

Share Your Wisdom
Don't be self-effacing even if you were a poor student or never finished formal schooling. Help your children set goals for their future based on the wisdom you have gained from life experiences. Don't demean yourself in front of your children, give them a good example. If there is a subject you cannot help them with, then send them to where they can get help, such as a resource text, their peers, or their teachers.

Beware of Stereotypes
Don't treat girls differently than boys when it comes to school work. Girls may need extra support and validation that intelligence is a virtue. Today's media bombards girls with messages that don't necessarily support your family's values and this can cause girls that are high functioning in elementary to become sidetracked as they reach the adolescent years. Be aware of its impact on your girls and keep the communication open.

Set Goals
Talk about the future with your children. Help them set short term and long term goals for their future. People who set goals for themselves end up having greater academic success than those who don't. It is never too early to have your children begin thinking of college in their future. Your opinion is greatly valued by your children, whether you are college educated or not.

The Role of the Student

THE PRIMARY STUDENT

Preparation

Come to class on time and prepared with all the things that are necessary for the school day—homework, pencils, and books.

During School

Pay attention, follow instructions, take advantage of class time and work during class to alleviate the amount of assignments you need to take home. Ask, ask, ask if there is something you don't understand. The best students are never afraid to ask questions when something is unclear.

Homework

Keep a list of all your homework. Keep your papers organized with your name and date. Work in a place at home that allows you to concentrate. Don't do homework late at night when you are tired. Go over your homework when you finish to be sure you didn't miss anything.

Organization

Organize your study space, both at home and at school. Organize your back pack. Use folders to keep your different subject areas separated. Keep a list of phone numbers of fellow students in case you have questions or are absent.

Study

Try to do your homework at the same time each day; that way it becomes habit. If you don't have homework, read a book.

Friendships

Be wise in your choice of friends. They should reflect your family values and help you be a better person. Your friends can be a great academic support system as you grow older.

THE ROLE OF THE SECONDARY STUDENT

Responsibility

Make the decision to be a responsible student. Follow all the recommendations of the primary student.

Attendance

Attendance is very important at this level. Some teachers don't allow make-up tests, no matter what excuse you may have.

Basic Skills

You should have a solid understanding of all the basic skills by high school. If not, seek outside tutoring or assistance.

Homework

You should have homework five or six days a week. If you have too little homework or are bored, it is possible that you are in classes that are too easy and not college prep courses. Speak with your counselor.

Involvement

Get involved in clubs, organizations, sports, activities, and in the "life" of high school. This should be a busy time in your life, but it shouldn't simply be spent studying. These activities are essential when filling out university and scholarship applications.

Set Goals

Set goals for yourself after graduation. Follow all the guidelines the counselor gives you for college preparation. Get to know your counselor; he or she is your greatest resource in high school. Keep a calendar of deadlines for college applications and scholarships.

Communication

This time in your life just before graduating, is full of important decisions that need to be made. Seek the advice of your parents regarding these decisions. They understand and love you more than anyone else in this world.

El Papel del Estudiante

EL ESTUDIANTE PRIMARIO

Preparacion

Llega a clase a tiempo y preparado con todas las cosas que necesites para el día escolar—tarea, lapices, libros etc.

Durante la Escuela

Pón atención, sigue instrucciones, toma ventaja del tiempo en la clase para alivianar la cantidad de materias asignadas que llevas a que han de hacerse en el hogar. Pregunta, pregunta, pregunta si hay algo que no haz entendido. Los mejores estudiantes son aquellos que no tienen temor de hacer preguntas cuando algo no está muy claro.

Tarea

Manten una lista de toda tu tarea. Manten tus hojas organizadas con tu nombre y fecha. Trabaja en un lugar de tu casa donde te puedas concentrar. No hagas tu tarea demasiado tarde cuando estas cansado. Repasa tu tarea cuando hayas terminado para estar seguro de que no te faltó algo.

Organización

Organiza tu espacio de estudio tanto en el hogar como en la escuela. Organiza tu mochila. Usa cuadernos para separar las diferentes materias. Manten listos contigo números de teléfono de tus compañeros de estudio, en caso que tengas preguntas o estes ausente.

Estudia

Trata de hacer la tarea al mismo tiempo cada día, de manera que esto se haga un hábito contigo. Si no tienes tarea, lee un libro.

Amistades

Usa sabiduría al escojer tus amigos. Ellos deben reflejar los valores de tu familia y ayudarte a ser una persona mejor. Tus amigos pueden ser un gran sístema de apoyo académico durante tú crecimiento a la madurez.

EL ESTUDIANTE SECUDARIO

Responsabilidad

Haz la decisión de ser un estudiante responsable. Sigue todas las sugerencias del estudiante primario.

Asistencia

La asistencia es muy importante en éste nivel. Algunos maestros no dejan tomar examenes tardíos, no importa que la excusa.

Aptitudes Básicas

Ya debes de tener un entendimiento sólido de todos los aptitudes básicas para la preparatoria. Si no, debes de buscar asistencia educativa fuera de la escuela o dentro de la preparatoria.

Tarea

Tus días para tareas deben de consistir de 5 a 6 cada semana. Si tienes muy poca tarea o estas aburrido, puede ser posible que tu estes asistiendo a clases muy fáciles y no apropiadas para un nivel de preparación para la universidad. Consulta con tu consejero.

Envuelvete

Participa en clubs, organizaciónes, deportes, actividades y en la vida de la preparatoria. Este período deberá ser un tiempo muy ocupado en tu vida, pero no debe de ser enfocado simplemente en el estudio. Dichas actividades son esenciales para cuando tu llenes las aplicaciónes para universidades o becas.

Forjate Metas

Forjate metas para despues de la graduación. Sigue todas las instrucciones que el consejero te de para tu preparación en la universidad. Trata de conocer a tu consejero, el o ella es tu más grande recurso en la secundaria. Lleva un itinerario para fechas de aplicaciónes en la universidad, becas, etc.

Comunicación

Este tiempo antes de graduar esta lleno de decisiónes importantes que se necesitan hacer. Busca la guianza de tus padres en referencia con estas decisiónes, ellos te conocen y te aman más que nadie en este mundo.

Answering Questions

BY CAROLYN KOTTMEYER

For Parents

One of the hardest things for parents of gifted kids is explaining them—to schools and teachers, to friends and relatives. Yes, they are children. But they are also gifted. All the time, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year—not just for three hours one day a week, or just in school. And often, the more gifted the child, the more different, and the more difficult it is to explain—why your child feels more comfortable with older children, why your child wants to learn what is thought appropriate for children years older, why your child has more adult friends than children. Sometimes, it's hard to understand them ourselves!

Here's a list of some of my favorite Internet articles for parents. Hopefully these resources will prepare you for your explanations—to yourself, to your school, to your family—and help you understand your gifted child better in the process.

Analogy Anthology Sometimes, the easiest way to explain anything is with an analogy, a comparison to something the person already understands. Here you'll find a collection of analogies to explain giftedness—from shoe size to runners to race cars to the classic, "Is It A Cheetah?" There is an analogy here for everyone.

Stuck in Another Dimension: The Exceptionally Gifted Child in School by Stephanie Tolan . This is one of the first essays I read when I was new to gifted, and confused and unsure of what was "wrong" with my child. A comforting piece for parents, if for no other reason than to know that you are not alone! Don't miss the other articles on Tolan's page, as well as her fiction collection for children and young adults.

The Walking Argument by Linda Silverman Do you live with this child? How do you deal with a child who can out-lawyer any good lawyer? Here are a few hints, and again—remember that you are not alone. And a quick second resource from Dr. Silverman is **Coping With Stress.** This is a great one for every parent and every gifted child.

When it all gets too much, take a moment to read **You Know You're The Parent of a Gifted Child When...** This collection of observations from parents of the young and old gifted child alike, are sure to bring a smile to your face.

The last resource is the biggest and is particularly useful for all those with exceptionally and profoundly gifted children; this new resource collection is wonderful! Assembled by the Davidson Foundation with help from professionals, parents, and children, **PG CyberSource** is the single greatest collection of both on-line and references to off-line information, tools, books, and even toys, for our children.

Kids' Korner

What? Why? How? Our gifted kids ask us question, after question, after question, regardless of their age or their fields of most interest. The second hardest thing about gifted kids, or maybe even the first, is explaining to them. Here are a few resources to answer those questions, and maybe help them find the answers themselves the next time!

The widest variety of questions is answered at **How Stuff Works.** From diesel engines to DSL, from book publishing to root beer, from the sun and stars to the toaster, microwave oven, and clothes dryer, this is a terrific site to find out How Stuff Works!

With a movie out by the time this issue is published, the **J.R.R. Tolkien** page is certain to be popular with our kids. From his family tree to amazing graphics collections, there is something here for every Middle-earth lover.

Don't miss **Geology Labs On-Line** where you can visit a virtual earthquake, virtual river flooding, and experiment with virtual isochron and radiocarbon dating!

For many kids (and their parents!) a picture is worth a thousand words. **Time Life Photo Site** has nearly that many pictures with collections from pop culture to science, from pioneer women to the country doctor, and lots more.

One of my personal favorites since childhood is the work of M. C. Escher. The **World of Escher** provides a gallery of all my favorites, and also has links to Penrose, another mathematical / artistic genius.

And I can't overlook my older daughter's favorite: **Fibonacci Numbers**. From honeybees to flower petals, this amazing mathematical sequence appears everywhere! Also check out the **Whale Club**, a website for marine mammal enthusiasts of all ages. Not to be left out, my younger daughter suggests **Snow Crystals**, and of course, **The Cheetah Spot.**

Finally, no gifted kid's favorite websites collection is complete without the perennial favorite of kids and parents—the **SET Game Site.** Don't miss the daily SET puzzle and daily Quiddler puzzle, free and on-line to enjoy! ■

CAROLYN KOTTMEYER is the webmistress of Hoagies' Gifted Education Page www.hoagiesgifted.org and Hoagies' Kids and Teens Page www.hoagieskids.org. She serves on the SENG Board of Directors (Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted).

WEBSITES

Analogy Anthology, **www.hoagiesgifted.org/analogies.htm**

Stuck in Another Dimension, **www.stephanietolan.com/another_dimension.htm**

The Walking Argument, **www.gifteddevelopment.com/Articles/The%20Walking%20Argument.htm**

Coping With Stress, **www.gifteddevelopment.com/Articles/Coping%20With%20Stress.htm**

You Know You're The Parent of a Gifted Child When, **www.hoagiesgifted.org/parent_of.htm**

PG CyberSource, **www.pgcybersource.org**

How Stuff Works, **www.howstuffworks.com**

J.R.R. Tolkien, **www.cscilab.uwaterloo.ca/u/relipper/tolkien/rootpage.html**

Geology Labs On-Line, **vcourseware3.calstatela.edu/GeoLabs**

Time Life Photo Site, **www.pathfinder.com/photo**

World of Escher **www.worldofescher.com/gallery**

Fibonacci Numbers, **www.ee.surrey.ac.uk/Personal/R.Knott/Fibonacci/fibnat.html**

Whale Club, **www.whaleclub.com**

SnowCrystals, **www.its.caltech.edu/~atomic/snowcrystals**

The Cheetah Spot, **www.cheetahspot.com**

SET Game Site, **www.setgame.com**

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All the Time in the World

TimeLiner 6.0

BY PATRICIA ROBERTSON

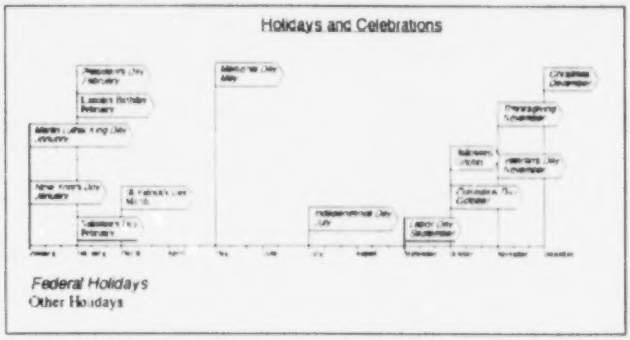
Choosing software for a classroom or computer lab is often a difficult task. Does the software offer enough flexibility? Can it be used in more than one situation? Can the software meet the needs of different learners? Is it easy enough for students to use without extensive training? *TimeLiner 5.0* by Tom Snyder Productions is a very flexible program that can be used in a variety of curricular areas and offers options for students at a variety of levels.

The definition of timeline is broad enough that *TimeLiner 5.0* can be used in many curricular areas. A science teacher might use the program to illustrate stages in seed germination or the developmental phases of a mammal's life. History teachers might want to ask students to track events in an ongoing major news story or show the history of their town or school. English teachers might have students organize the works of an author such as William Shakespeare or John Steinbeck to examine how their writing evolved over time. Student biographies are a natural use of this program. Fine arts classes might trace art as it developed during the Renaissance and then tie this development to political changes occurring in the same time period. Bilingual users can elect to use the program in Spanish by choosing that option from the View Menu.

The Merge feature allows several groups to create their own timelines and then merge each one into a master timeline. Using this feature will permit the teacher to break an assignment into more manageable parts. Students will be able to go more deeply into a smaller, more focused segment. Students might focus on a location, a time period, or the contributions of a particular individual or group.

Teachers and students will appreciate the variety of options available to *TimeLiner* users. Before creating a new timeline, users will select the type of timeline that they will create. It might be a standard (traditional) timeline. Students who don't want a timeline tied to a particular year might create a monthly, weekly, or daily timeline. Creating a geologic timeline allows users to cover a time period beginning as early as 100 million years ago. A custom timeline can organize data such as temperature or percentages.

Information is entered using a dialog box that prompts the student to add notes, a graphic or a sound file. Each event can also be assigned to a category which must be user defined. This feature is useful if students want to use a variety of formats to display their data. Data can also be imported from a word processing file enabling students to do some of their work ahead of time.



Timelines can be simple or complex and used in a variety of curriculum areas by students of any level

Timeliner 5:0
Tom Snyder Productions
800-342-0236
www.tomsnyder.com

Suggested retail price: $79.95

System Requirements: CD ROM Drive Macintosh: PowerPC or better: MacOS 8.1, 133 Mhz, 256-color monitor (640x480 resolution)

Windows: Win 95 or higher: Pentium 133 Mhz, 256-color monitor (640x480 resolution).

Many students like to use graphics to enhance their work, and the program includes a large number of clipart pictures. Students are not limited to these choices, however. Graphics can be created in draw or paint programs. Photographs, pictures, drawings, and maps can be scanned, saved in a compatible format and imported into *TimeLiner 5.0*. If a student wants to include personal photographs, most film processors now offer the option of having pictures printed to disk or to a CD ROM. These images as well as photographs taken with a digital camera can then be imported directly into a timeline.

TimeLiner 5.0 also allows students to add URL's for websites to their work. Clicking the link will take the viewer directly to the selected website on any Internet enabled computer. A student who wants to add a written or audio note to a timeline can do so quickly and easily.

Several presentation options provide multiple ways to present data. Each timeline can be printed or presented as a slide show. A timeline can be copied and inserted in a word processing document. Timelines can also be exported as graphics. In general, timelines that are three pages wide or less will be exported most successfully. A graphic exported as a JPEG file can usually be included on a student created webpage.

TimeLiner 5.0 users can count on many support features available through the companies website at **www.tomsnyder.com/index.asp.** Included on the *TimeLiner* Online page are correlations to state standards, tips for teachers and students, and some suggestions for finding clipart and media to enhance presentations.

TimeLiner 5.0 provides many opportunities to approach a subject in a very personalized way. If a topic can be organized in a linear fashion, this program allows students of any level to develop a project that reflects their grade level, learning style and subject matter expertise. ■

PATRICIA ROBERTSON has been a classroom teacher, library media specialist, technology coordinator, and administrator. She has been involved with technology in education for nearly 20 years. She can be reached at jnrpsr@pacbell.net.

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Gifting the Gifted

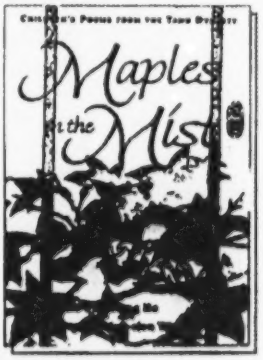
BY JODY FICKES SHAPIRO

It's the time of year when even non-list makers are driven to that expediency to get the right gifts to the right kids. It helps at least to write down names and ages. A few other pertinent facts like, "loves Monty Python," "wants to be a lawyer like Uncle Fred," or "planning to run away from home when he gets his driver's license," are helpful but not critical. And to give you a head start, here are a few suggestions. What about getting a great poetry book for each of your own children, relatives, students and friends? Sparkling fresh and stunningly illustrated is Julia Cunningham's *The Stable Rat and Other Christmas Poems*. Cunningham's unique voice, accompanied by Anita Lobel's richly colored paintings make this a sharing-aloud feast for ear and eye.

For younger children, intriguing shape poems found in two collections by Joan Graham, *Splish Splash* and *Flicker Flash*, will invite many re-readings and are great spring-

boards for a child's creativity. Your friends who love camping will thank you for helping them relive summer memories through Kristine O'Connell George's newest collection, *Toasting Marshmallow: Camping Poems*. This is George's third collection to celebrate the pleasures of life in the outdoors and nature. Like the first two, *The Great Frog Race and Other Poems* and *Old Elm Speaks: Tree Poems*, it is beautifully illustrated in rich full-color oil paintings by Kate Kiesler.

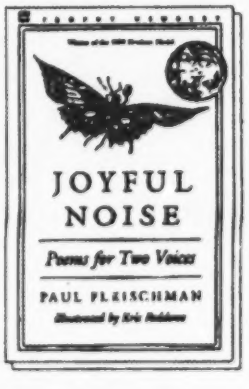
Another favorite of ours, *Maples in the Mist* by Mingfong Ho intrigued us not only for it's incredible paintings by Jean and Mou-Sien Tseng but also because of Ho's motivation for translating eighth century Tang Dynasty poetry that has so long been part of the literary experience of Chinese children.



She wanted her own children, being raised so far from their ancestral homeland, to know something of their heritage. Coincidentally, at the time this lovely book was published, I was reading Nien Cheng's compelling memoir, *Life and Death in Shanghai*, in which she describes her imprisonment during the madness of the "cultural revolution." What maintained her spirit and sanity, she says, was remembering and reciting to herself, the poems of the Tang dynasty she had learned as a child.

Consider, too, a collection of poetry as a present for an entire family to enjoy. Poet Jack Prelutsky has edited several anthologies including *The Beauty of the Beast* and *Twentieth Century Children's Poetry Treasury* that would make handsome additions to any family's library.

A joint family read aloud session of poetry from Paul Fleischman's *Joyful Noise*, a collection of poetry about insects scripted for two voices or *Big Talk: Poems for Four Voices* is a delightful activity. Make some time for reading poetry with family and friends during the holiday season.



Teenagers appreciate the collections of Naomi Shahib Nye, particularly *What Have You Lost?* poetry by young adults exploring the many faces of loss. Its photographs by Michael Nye add another level of poignancy. Her collection of love poems, *I Feel a Little Jumpy Around You: Paired Poems by Men and Women*, with a mixture of humor, irony and passion, will earn you a high mark for excellent taste from any number of teenagers or a newly engaged couple you want to impress.

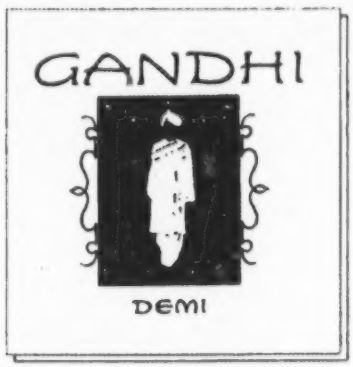
Janet Wong's *Behind the Wheel*, exploring the metaphors of driving, will be near and dear to the heart of those fifteen-year-olds counting the days till the *big drivers test*. Lee Bennett Hopkins's *Pass the Poetry Please*, currently in its third edition, and Paul B. Janeczko's *Poetry from A-Z* are are both invaluable tools for any teacher or parent on your list who has (or you wish did have) an interest in bringing children and poetry together.

Okay, so if poetry isn't ringing bells for you, what about building on the enthusiasm for reading that J.K.Rowling's Harry Potter series has awakened in most of our youngsters. Kids aren't pining away waiting for book number five to appear. Instead they have taken up Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events, that witty and melodramatic series that follows the three Baudelaire orphans as they try to foil the dastardly Count Olaf, scheming to wrest from them their rightful inheritance. It's a sophisticated, vocabulary stretching romp, extending over many installments. (The first is aptly named *The Bad Beginnings*.) Discovered initially by older readers, including university students, the series written for ages 10 and up has been attracting a huge audience of all ages who appreciate its send-up of maudlin romantic fiction. As its pseudonymous author Lemony Snicket (who pretends to never reveal his real self in public and sends a stand-in replacement for public appearances) warns readers at the outset, "If you have

picked up this book with the hope of finding a simple and cheery tale, I'm afraid you have picked up the wrong book, altogether."

Reissues and new works by author Tamora Pierce are building a following. Her spirited stories feature young women training for and the culture of knighthood in both The Song of the Lioness Quartet series and in her follow-up Protector of the Small. A whole new generation of readers are discovering Anne McCaffrey's Dragon Riders of Pern series and Ursula LeGuin's classic Earthsea fantasies. And along with old standbys like *Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster and *Bed-knob and Broomstick* by Mary Norton, authors from overseas like Great Britain's Eva Ibbotson (*Secret of Platform 13* and *Which Witch*) and Australia's Emily Rodda (Rowan of Rin series) are finding an eager audience in America.

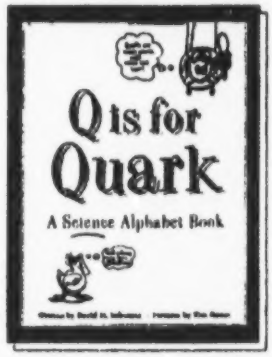
Many gifted readers prefer books about real things and people, however, and the challenge is to find nonfiction books that are both well written and stimulating. Laurie Lawlor, a talented writer of historical fiction as well



as nonfiction, accomplishes that balance in *Helen Keller: Rebellious Spirit*, published this past summer. Illustrated with photographs, it offers an in-depth look at a remarkably gifted woman; she was born in the the South during the harsh period of reconstruction of the late nineteenth century, and lived to witness both world wars and the tumultuous years of the Vietnam era.

Another new contribution for older readers is Jan Greenberg's and Sandra Jordan's *Vincent Van Gogh: Portrait of an Artist*; it is illustrated with color-plates and includes quotes from letters, and is also indexed. This pair have previously collaborated on biographies of architect Frank Gehry and contemporary artist, Chuck Close.

James Rumford has created a stunning picture-book biography, *Traveling Man: The Journey of Ibn Battuta, 1325-1354*. Ibn Battuta recorded his 30 years of travel that took



him from Tangier, Morocco to China, traveling though the Middle East, India and Turkey. Rumford's watercolors alone would be worth a journey through this lovely book; and the text, quoted from translations of Ibn Battuta's own writings, opens a window into fourteenth century Asia.

Gandhi is the subject of Demi's newest picture-book biography as she traces the life of a "scared shy child" who became a "great, good, generous man." Her notes include some of Gandhi's sayings which could be used to spark meaningful discussion, particularly in light of our contemporary concerns.

One hooray I am taking public is the reissue of Sara Fanelli's *My Map Book* which is one of the most "gifted-friendly" works I have seen in my years as a librarian, bookseller, and literature consultant. Brilliant in its simplicity, it is a primary introduction to graphic representation. "Maps" are time lines, floor plans, anatomy charts, and even a measurement of love as revealed in "A map of my heart." It has been been unavailable for several years and we have been nagging the publishers to bring it back. So, hooray! It belongs in every child's library.

Two last suggestions that might resonate with someone special—one for the scientist on your list and one for the sports or ancient history buff. First is *Q is for Quark: A Science Alphabet Book* by David Schwartz and illustrated by Kim Dover. Schwartz offers up fairly comprehensive and coherent explanations for a gamut of terminology from Atom to ZZZ (sleep phenomenon). It is published in the same accessible format as his previous, *G is for Googal*, a selection of math terminology presented alphabetically.

And finally, a generously illustrated, award winning import from Australia, *Olympia: Warrior Athletes of Ancient Greece*, has to be *the* answer to that really hard to please child who would rather be doing just about anything else but read. Author Dyan Blacklock and illustrator David Kennett have designed a book filled with information on the eighth century BCE games that inspired our modern Olympics. We think it will absolutely grab a reluctant reader as well as the visual learner's attention.

We hope this column is a help and inspiration. Books have so often provided an island of comfort and sanity to us that we wish others this experience as well. The best to you in the coming New Year. ■

JODY FICKES SHAPIRO is a children's literature consultant and owner of Adventures for Kids bookstore in Ventura, CA. She can be reached at jodyshapiro@bigpond.com.

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(Note: In the case of series, usually only the first title has been listed. Also as a guide a suggested readership may be indicated))

Olympia: Warrior Athletes of Ancient Greece
Dyan Blacklock
2001, Walker
0-8027-8790-8

Life and Death in Shanghai
Nien Cheng
1988, Penguin
0-14-010870-X (adult)

The Stable Rat and Other Christmas Poems
Julia Cunningham
2001, Greenwillow
0-688-17799-9

Gandhi
Demi,
2001, Margaret McElderry
0-689-84149-3

My Map Book
Sara Fanelli
1995, Harper
0-06-026455-1

Big Talk
Paul Fleischman
2000, Candlewick
0-7636-0636-4

Joyful Noise
Paul Fleischman
1988, Harper
0-06-021852-5, 0-06-446093-2 paper

Great Frog Race
Kristine O'Connell George
1997, Clarion
0-395-77607-4

Old Elm Speaks
Kristine O'Connell George
1998, Clarion
0-395-87611-7

Toasting Marshmallows
Kristine O'Connell George
2001, Clarion
0-618-04597-X

Flicker Flash
Joan Bransfield Graham
1999, Houghton
0-395-90501-X

Splish Splash
Joan Bransfield Graham
1994, Houghton
0-395-70128-7

Vincent Van Gogh: Portrait of an Artist
Jan Greenberg & Sandra Jordan
2001, Delacorte
0-385-32806-0

Maples in the Mist
Mingfong Ho
1996, Lothrop
0-688-12044-X
(note: This may be difficult to find but worth the effort.)

Pass the Poetry Please
Lee Bennett Hopkins
1998, Harper
0-06-446199-8 paper (adult)

Secret of Platform 13
Eva Ibbotson
1998, Dutton
0-525-45929-4, 0-14-1302806-0 paper

Which Witch
Eva Ibbotson
1999, Dutton
0-525-46164-7, 0-14-130427-8 paper

Poetry from A-Z
Paul B. Janeczko
1994, Atheneum
0-02-747672-3 (11+)

Phantom Tollbooth
Norton Juster
1988, Random
0-394-81500-9, 0-394-82037-1 paper

Helen Keller: Rebellious Spirit
Laurie Lawlor
2001, Holiday
0-8234-1588-0

A Wizard of Earthsea
Ursula K. Le Guin
1984, Bantam
0-553-26250-5 paper (12+)

Dragonflight (Book 1, Dragon Rider of Pern series)
Anne McCaffrey
1991, Ballantine
0-345-33546-5 paper (12+)

Bed-knob and Broomstick
Mary Norton
2000, Harcourt
0-15-202450-6, 0-15-202456-5 paper

I Feel a Little Jumpy Around You
Naomi Shahib Nye, Ed.
1996, Simon&Schuster
0-689-805518-7, 0-689-81341-4 paper, (13+)

What Have You Lost?
Naomi Shahib Nye, Ed.
1999, Greenwillow
0-688-16184-7, 0-380-7330-7 paper (13+)

Alanna: The First Adventure (Book 1, The Song of the Lioness Quartet)
Tamora Pierce
1989, Random House
0-679-80114-6 paper

First Test (Book 1, Protector of the Small series)
Tamora Pierce
2000, Random House
0-679-88917-5 paper

The Beauty of the Beast
Jack Prelutsky, Editor
1996, Knopf
0-679-87028-X

Twentieth Century Children's Poetry Treasury
Jack Prelutsky, Editor
2000, Knopf
0-679-89314-8

Rowan of Rin
Emily Rodda
2001, Greenwillow
0-06-029707-7

Traveling Man: The Journey of Ibn Battuta, 1325-1354
James Rumford
2001, Houghton
0-6180-8366-9

Q is for Quark
David Schwartz
2001, Tricycle Press
1-582-46021-3

The Bad Beginnings (Book 1, A Series of Unfortunate Events)
Lemony Snicket
1999,Harper
0-06-440766-7

Hostile Hospital (Book 8, A Series of Unfortunate Events)
Lemony Snicket
2001, Harper
0-06-440866-3

Behind the Wheel
Janet Wong
1999, Margaret McElderry
0-689-82531-6

—Jody Fickes Shapiro

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Removing the Mask: Giftedness in Poverty

By Paul Slocumb & Ruby Payne

(2001) aha! Process, Inc.
paperback, $25.00, 380 pp.
ISBN: 1-929229-00-3
800-424-9484

REVIEWED BY RUTH WHARTON

Removing the Mask: Giftedness in Poverty provides an alternative method of examining the many issues surrounding equity and access for quality education. A large segment of our population traditionally left out of programs for gifted education are the children of poverty, yet their numbers continue to increase in other special needs programs.

Removing the Mask: Giftedness in Poverty is written especially for practitioners who are sincere in their commitment to identify and appropriately serve the best and the brightest from all cultures and socio-economic levels. Many of our programs at local, state, and national levels fall short of the mark when compared to the recommendations made in this book. Unlike many authors, Slocumb and Payne go far beyond the accusation and fault-finding stage to offer instruments, Environmental Opportunities Profiles, rubrics for reading and writing assessments, and peer nomination forms which have been successfully used in the identification of students living in environments of poverty.

The "one size fits all" practice under the guise of treating students as equal leads practitioners in many educational arenas to set up parallel programs that are grossly unequal because they use a standard screening and service delivery model regardless of the students' background and environmental exposure.

While much of the content in this text focuses on identification, it is also strong in the areas of program design and curriculum for gifted students of generational or situational poverty. The author reiterates throughout the text that an equitable identification process is only a partial solution to the issue of equity. Once students are identified, changes within the traditional program must occur in order for these students to participate fully and to stay in the program. Training for teachers and other support staff is essential in facilitating the paradigm shift necessary to truly remove the mask which hinders our recognition of characteristics of giftedness in children of poverty. ■

RUTH WHARTON is the Director of Special Education Staff Development for the Los Angeles Unified School District. She chairs the Special Needs Committee for the California Association for the Gifted.

A Framework for Understanding Poverty

By Ruby Payne

(1998) aha! Process, Inc.
paperback, $22.00, 153 pp.
ISBN: 0-9647437-2-8
800-424-9484

REVIEWED BY the Special Needs Committee of the California Association for Gifted

Educators have struggled in recent years with a myriad of issues focusing on school reform, restructuring, diversity, and the impact of cultural differences and socio-economic status on achievement. Ruby Payne observed that patterns of achievement of middle and high income students from African-American and Hispanic cultures were often no better than those students from lower socio-economic levels. This observation led her to question why this situation existed since these students appeared to have the same opportunities as the Anglo students in their school. She quickly surmised that the language and practices in our schools are often incongruent with the language and traditions maintained in the home. She coined the terms "formal" and "informal register" to further explain how language is often interpreted by those of non-dominant cultures.

Understanding the Framework of Poverty should be required reading in all teacher training, pre-service, and in-service programs. This book provides a wealth of background information through case histories and experiential vignettes that are extremely thought-provoking and when internalized, cause much reflection and discussion as to why many of our well-intentioned efforts have not yielded success in teaching children from impoverished backgrounds.

Dr. Payne challenges us to complete inventories which clearly expose our vulnerability should we suddenly find ourselves in situational poverty. Much discussion is given to the differences between situational poverty, cases wherein one's economic status suddenly changes as the result of job loss, death of a spouse, or illness, as opposed to people born into generational poverty wherein one has never experienced a higher socio-economic level.

Reading and sharing this book with a colleague is of great benefit as if offers many opportunities for discussion and clarification of Dr. Payne's position on the effects of poverty. Of particular interest are the surveys which allow the reader to determine whether or not they could survive in a state of poverty.

A wealth of support materials and trainings are available through www.aha.process.com for those interested in pursuing in-depth understanding of the framework and its potential for systemic change. ■

The Special Needs Committee is one of six standings committees of the California Association for the Gifted; it meets regularly as part of scheduled meetings of the Board of Directors.

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Advocating for YOUR Gifted Child

A video written and directed by Sandra Warren featuring a talk to parents by Susan Winebrenner. Produced at Kent State University Teleproductions.

VHS, color, $50.00, 45 min.
ASIN: 1880175010

REVIEWED BY CHERIE K. DRUMMOND

"I'm bored. I really want to learn, but he just gives us workbook pages," complains Elizabeth, eldest child in the Bauman family. These familiar comments, often heard in families of gifted children, are Elizabeth's response to a phone call home from her teacher as portrayed in the opening scene of the video tape, *Advocating for YOUR Gifted Child.*

This informative video tape begins with a typical family scene. Children are doing homework and mother is preparing for dinner when a phone call comes in from Elizabeth's teacher. He indicates there is a problem with Elizabeth. Her attitude toward school has changed, she is unable to concentrate, has a lack of follow through, is unable to sit still, and fits the profile of a student with learning problems, or even a disability. Incredulous, Mrs. Bauman indicates she has never had difficulty before, has always done advanced work, is always doing research at home, is writing her own novel, and flies through homework. Elizabeth says she already knows what he is teaching and complains that the teacher won't answer her questions.

The stage is set for the parents to begin learning about giftedness and positive approaches to advocating for their child's needs. Mrs. Bauman calls a friend to share the problem and is invited to a parent meeting featuring Susan Winebrenner, author of *Teaching the Gifted in the Regular Classroom.* She protests, saying, "You know we don't believe in the 'gifted stuff'; we just want her to be a regular kid." The friend says, "That's the problem. She probably is not just a regular kid. We had a similar problem with our son and started learning about gifted learners and their special needs." She convinces Mrs. Bauman to come to the meeting and to bring her husband.

At the meeting, nationally known speaker and author, Susan Winebrenner, offers many parental tips including the following:

- find the special abilities in each child and nurture them
- avoid comparisons among siblings and other children
- don't label kids with our expectations
- value kids for who they are, not for their accomplishments

She discusses the topics of "twice exceptional," "perfectionism," and "striving for excellence." She speaks in depth about intelligence not being the same as effortlessness, and the need for real learning to take place with an appropriately challenging curriculum. "High grades are not a guarantee that real learning happens," and "grades and class rank do not matter until high school" are two points she uses to encourage parents not to place top value on the perfect report card.

With this foundation demonstrating the need for parental and self advocacy for exceptional learners, Winebrenner shares several strategies for advocating "without turning the teacher off."

First, get the mission statement of the school or district. Using the language of the statement, ask the teacher to explain how the special needs of your child are being met. A typical complaint of teachers is that students won't do their work. But indeed, they will do their own work; it is the teacher's work they won't do. Winebrenner calls this the "confusing pronoun syndrome." Gifted learners often complain of being bored, and this bears investigation. Winebrenner says there are two kinds of bored: when students are pretty sure they already know the material, or when they learn faster than the way material is presented. Parents can ask the teacher to provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate at the beginning of a learning sequence that they already know the material to be presented. If they pass the "test," a different, appropriate learning opportunity should be presented.

She concludes with words from a gifted learner who says that his teachers might as well have ridden with Jesse James for all the time they stole from him, and urges us all to avoid the "Jesse James" syndrome.

The video concludes with the Baumans preparing for their visit with Elizabeth's teacher and a commitment to continue educating themselves about exceptional learners. Although the video is aimed at parents, it is also worthwhile for anyone working with the gifted, especially those new to the field. The end of the video has ten discussion starter questions that could be used in any setting and could spark enlightening dialogue. ■

CHERIE K. DRUMMOND is the Parent Representatives Chair for the California Association for the Gifted, an education consultant, and an instructor in the GATE Certificate Program at the University of California, San Diego.

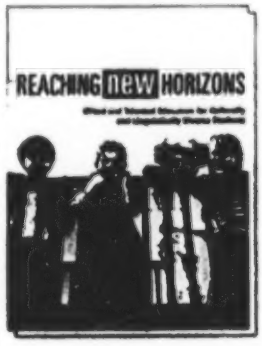
Reaching New Horizons: Gifted and Talented Education for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

By Jaime A. Castellano & Eva I. Díaz, Editors

(2002) Allyn and Bacon
paperback, $46.00, 336 pp.
ISBN: 0-205-31413-9
800-666-9433

REVIEWED BY MARGARET GOSFIELD

The field has waited a long time for this book and I predict that it will become a landmark publication! With 15 years of service as a district program coordinator for gifted and talented education, I know that identifying and serving underrepresented populations—primarily gifted Hispanic students in my district—is one of the most vexing issues facing practitioners in the field. It is vexing because so much labor has gone into efforts to reduce the disparity with less than satisfactory outcomes, and because there have been so few guidelines for practitioners in the field.



At last we have a book to serve as a prac-

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tical guide in achieving our goal of both equity and excellence in identification and service to "culturally and linguistically diverse students," to use the terminology of the editors.

The book is a collection of essays, the heart of which is contained in Section III, Identifying and Nurturing Gifted Potential and Bilingualism, and Section IV, Strengthening Teacher Preparation and Parent Involvement. Chapter after chapter illustrates program models, assessment instruments, teaching strategies, and parent involvement programs that work. Most highly recommended are the following:

Chapter 5 - Renavigating the Waters: The Identification and Assessment of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students for Gifted and Talented Education by Jaime Castellano

Chapter 6 - Gifted Education Program Options: Connections to English-Language Learners by Jaime Castellano

Chapter 10 - Portraits of Success: Programs that Work by Nilda Aguirre and Norma Hernández

Chapter 12 - Recruiting Teachers for Bilingual Gifted and Talented Programs by Ernesto Bernal

Chapter 13 - A Parent-Family Involvement Model to Serve Gifted Hispanic English-Language Learners in Urban Public School Settings by Rosina Gallagher.

The only questionable aspect I found in the book appeared in the opening chapters. Eva Díaz presents an historical analysis in two parts: the 1850s to 1980s, and 1990s to the present, that might better have been omitted. Her description of the historical role played by public schools in promoting assimilation into American society by immigrants is entirely negative.

> Therefore, schools aimed primarily at (1) shaping behaviors, (2) alleviating perceived social problems, and (3) reinforcing standing social structures rather than cultivating cognitive skills and intellectual abilities. These industrialist aims (i.e. unity, social order, and obedience) were further supported by capitalistic emphasis on 'citizenship training' for culturally and linguistically diverse immigrant people. (p. 3)

She also seems to go to great lengths to identify and castigate the state and federal policies of Republican leaders while praising those of Democrats. This left-liberal bias provides an inaccurate historical picture at best, and certainly is not conducive to collaboration with those of us who believe the public school system has been a positive force in supporting American ideals. I suggest that you leave these chapters until last so they don't put you off for the rest of the book.

The book as a whole, however, promises to become a valuable asset for practitioners. Ernesto Bernal states in the foreword that, "Moving into the area of educating the culturally and linguistically gifted student still requires a certain level of courageous experimentation and badly needed documentation and evaluation. As of now, there is no magic wand." This book does not contain magic, but it goes far in providing the tools needed by those who are working to better identify and serve this special population of gifted children. ■

MARGARET GOSFIELD is editor of *Gifted Education Communicator*, however, the opinions expressed herein are her own and do not necessarily represent the views of the California Association for the Gifted.

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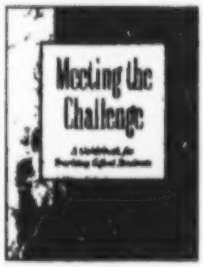

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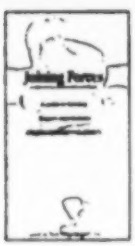

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